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Hafa Adai!

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'We grieve with New Zealand'

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinares@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The bishop of the Archdiocese of Chalan Kanoa grieves for the victims of the terror attack in two Muslim mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, that killed 50 people over the weekend.

"We grieve with the families of the victims of [this] terrible hate crime in New Zealand. We pray for them and we ask during this season of Lent that we will be reminded of not only God's mercy toward us but also of His call for us to be merciful toward others," said Bishop Ryan P. Jimenez

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NEW UFO OFFICERS
Philippine honorary consul to the CNMI Glicerio "Eli" Arago, leftmost, inducts the new officers of the United Filipino Organization Sunday evening at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

ERWIN ENCINARES

See story on Page 4

More treatment for man who stole judge's gun

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The federal court ordered yesterday an additional 120 days of further treatment and evaluation for a habitual offender who stole a gun of a judge and was found mentally incompetent to proceed with the sentencing.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona ordered that Cling Philip Kaipat's period of commitment in the U.S. Medical Center for Federal Prisoners be extended until June 22, 2019.

See MENTAL on Page 4

CEC encourages Precinct 3 voters to vote

» **Democratic Party chair says they were not informed about manual counting**

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Only 99 individuals cast their votes yesterday on the third day of the seven-day early voting for the special election for a Precinct 3 seat in the House of the Representatives. This brings to 365 the number of early voters thus far.

That prompted Commonwealth Election Commission administrative officer Kayla Igitol to urge all vot-

See CEC on Page 4

Flash floods, earthquake in Indonesia kill over 80

By JEFFREY PATTIRAJAWANE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

JAYAPURA, Indonesia (AP)—The number of people killed after torrential downpours triggered flash floods and mudslides that tore through mountainside villages in Indonesia's easternmost province has climbed to 79, with dozens of others missing, officials said Monday.

On Sunday, the disaster-prone country was hit by an earthquake,

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INSIDE

NATION
Residents in parts of southwestern Iowa are forced out of their homes as water flowed.
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ASIA
A Christchurch gun shop acknowledges selling guns to the man accused of killing 50 people.
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LIFE & STYLE
There are challenges that come with running the last Blockbuster Video on the planet.
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Local

From being an absent parent to now a present mom

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
Kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

KIMBERLY BAUTISTA
The Drug Court team poses with the program's two newest graduates.

From being an absent mother, Emma Iriarte now describes herself as the present mother she always wanted to be.

She credits her turnaround to the Drug Court program of the CNMI Superior Court.

Last Friday, Iriarte and Waedynne Maratita officially completed the program with a graduation ceremony at the Superior Court.

According to Iriarte, five years of using methamphetamine caused her to lose everything, including herself, but most especially her family and the joys of being a mother to her four daughters.

After over a year in the program and over 200 days of being sober, Iriarte has been able to completely turn her life around.

"Drug Court helped me a lot. It helped me gain my life back, [it] helped bring me back to society, basically everything. It helped me get a job, helped me with my family. My relationship with my family now is really great," she said.

Despite her many strides forward, Iriarte said she still struggles with her addiction day to day, that triggers are unavoidable during recovery.

"The hardest thing that I had encountered was just running into triggers. Even alcohol could be a trigger," she said. Yet she knows that recovery is possible. "I just take it one day at a time," she added.

According to Drug Court judge Theresa Kim-Tenorio, Iriarte entered the program during the program's infancy and was eight months pregnant, but she was able to complete the program.

Maratita also acknowledged losing her family at the time when she was still an active drug user. She said it came to a point where she was literally homeless and she and her partner were living off just one can of beans.

Today, Maratita plans to stay on the path to recovery and even go back to school and get a degree so she can help others who also struggling with drug addiction.

"I have plans to move because its best for me and I want to get back to school. Probably get into a field just like these brave people in Drug Court, to help others and make a difference one person at a time," she said.

Maratita encourages others who are still struggling with addiction to get help before it is too late.

"It just takes that one hit. I lost everything, I lost everybody at one point and I almost lost my life and you don't want to get to that point. If you know that you're already losing things you value in your life, please start getting help before it's too late. Don't wait like I did. There's a lot of help out there. All you have to do is reach out. Recovery is possible.

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Torres appeals for additional Medicaid benefits for NMI

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has sought the assistance of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar II in providing additional assistance to the CNMI Medicaid program, in the wake of the devastation wrought by Super Typhoon Yutu last October.

"We have initiated planning for the implementation of austerity based on the reduction in financial revenues. While we have been working hard to recover from [Super Typhoon Yutu], and appreciate efforts of the [U.S.] Department of Homeland Security and [Federal Emergency Management Agency], the overall and full financial recovery will take years. We are also hopeful for a quick recovery, but we remain wary of a further reduction in government revenues and slower return to normalcy," said Torres.

Besides its physical destruction, Yutu has gravely affected the CNMI's economy; projections show that revenues will be reduced. The CNMI government was also forced to lower its budget by 4.7 percent: $12,048,000.

The CNMI government has fronted the costs for relief and recovery but will be reimbursed by FEMA, with the first batch of federal money expected to come in next month.

Torres said his administration hopes that HHS would accord to the CNMI's Medicaid beneficiaries the same assistance it had provided to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands when both U.S. territories were also struck by disasters.

"We are in need of an increase of funding for a period of time. We have studied the significant assistance provided to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and are committed to making reasonable and appropriate progress to achieve the same objectives to submit data to the Transformed Medicaid Statistical Information System and to establish a Medicaid Fraud Control Unit," said Torres.

He said his administration hopes to obtain the support of President Donald J. Trump. "[Hopefully] President Trump will encourage [U.S.] Congress to address the needs of the territories by applying the statutory requirements equal to the states for Medical Assistance Program and the Federal Matching Assistance Percentage."

"The CNMI will have completely expended the last of the funds under the Affordable Care Act during this quarter and the Medicaid program is planning to severely curtail services that will directly affect our beneficiaries and our fragile health system."

18 named to PCF Class of 2019

A total of 18 professionals have been chosen to participate in the 2019 Class of the leadership program called Pacific Century Fellows.

The new class consists of Northern Marianas College Cooperative Research Extension & Educational Services extension aide Lorenza Aldan; Precinct 4 Rep. Sheila Babauta; Office of the Governor press secretary Kevin Bautista; NMC director of enrollment services Manny Castro; CNMI Public School System director of finance Christopher Ching; Koblerville Elementary School teacher Bonny Cruz; Kanoa Resort guest relations manager Ricardo Cruz Jr.; Docomo Pacific CNMI marketing coordinator Clinton Dela Cruz; NMC early intervention counselor Kaelani Demapan; Xerox Corp. executive Nola Hix; Tinian Mayor's Office coordinating officer Alexis Hofschneider; Shirley's Coffee Shop operations manager Noelle Macario; Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s Non-Communicable Disease Bureau acting administrator Amber-Lynn Mendiola; KES teacher Le'ah Murphy; CHCC dialysis unit social worker Chrislaine Pangelinan; Berline and Associates LLC lawyer Benjamin Petersburg; Commonwealth Casino Commission financial auditor Michael Sheu; and Kagman High School principal Leila Staffler.

According to Bautista, he looks forward to finding solutions to the issues facing the CNMI.

"As press secretary…I'm part of a team with a fundamental duty every day to address the Commonwealth's toughest challenges," he said. "The lessons I look to gain from PCF will complement my job well because we're called to be proactive in our solutions and to bring people together toward a common goal.

"I believe the goal of bettering the lives of every single person who calls these islands home is the guiding principle in the way we develop the Commonwealth for the future.," he added.

In a previous interview, CNMI Scholarship Office workforce program coordinator and Class of 2017 Fellow Monique Sablan told *Saipan Tribune* that those selected by the program would undergo at least two retreats to Guam and Hawaii for three days and a week respectively. She further noted that the retreats educate fellows on several topics relative to the CNMI and the Western Pacific in general such as workforce development, education, government, healthcare, and more.

"Some of the most important things that I've learned is to see first-hand how these agencies and corporations within the public and private sector…[operate]," she said. ***(Erwin Encinares)***

Legislation aims to clarify parental rights

Sen. Vinnie F. Sablan (Ind-Saipan) has introduced a bill to address the lack of law regarding genetic or gestational surrogacy.

Senate Bill 21-26 would establish the Commonwealth Uniformed Parentage Act in the CNMI.

Sablan said providing clarity and uniformity for all possible parentage rights in the CNMI is the driving force of the bill.

"Now that surrogacy has been introduced as an option in the CNMI, it is important that we put in place regulations to ensure that all parties are protected from any liability that may arise," said Sablan.

Being a surrogate parent has become an employment opportunity to qualified females in the CNMI, where a paid advertisement in the local newspaper was also published.

The ad is looking for females between 21 to 40 years old and have at least given birth once naturally. The compensation is from $25,000 to $35,000 with $500 for successful referrals.

"Due to the complexity of surrogacy, it is advisable to have an independent legal representation throughout the surrogacy arrangement for each party involved. S.B. 21-26 does not aim to stop the industry, but [aims to] ensure that all aspects of the process are covered so that both parties are protected," Sablan said. ***(Jon Perez)***

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UFO inducts new officers, members

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinares@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The United Filipino Organization installed eight new officers and 15 new board members Sunday evening at the Fiesta Resort & Spa's Hibiscus Hall.

The organization is now officially led by president Gerry De Guzman, vice president Marcelo Masilungan, secretary Birhen Martinez, assistant secretary Fernando Enano, treasurer Ladyvir Canape, assistant treasurer Florenda Miranda, auditor Yolanda Villavicencio, and public relations officer Carlito Marquez.

The new board members are former president Marlon Regaton as chairman, Flor Miranda, Geoffrey Melchor, Nelida Atalig, Bong Malasarte, Maria Annamae Adaza, Hermie Coronejo, Ladyvir Canape, Birhen Martinez, Raul Abordonado, Angelita Mamaril, Joselito Espino, Zaldy Quebral, Alex Nario, and Tyrone Garon.

"We will work hard and find ways to better serve the Filipino community in the CNMI," De Guzman said in a speech.

According to De Guzman, despite some disagreements among the officers at times, the common goal remains the same—to better serve the community.

"We argue over views and ideas…but in the end, [we work] together [toward] one goal. Let us always keep in our minds that we are [sacrificing] for the community," he added.

In attendance during the ceremony were Philippine honorary consul to the CNMI Glicerio Arago, Diocese of Chalan Kanoa Bishop Ryan P. Jimenez, and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios.

According to Palacios, he recognizes Filipinos as not just one of the many nationalities on Saipan but part of the Commonwealth community.

"The Filipino community is a part of the Commonwealth community," he said. "Sure, we have this ethnic organization for fellowship purposes, but we are very proud—I am very proud of our Filipino organizations in this community," he added.

"The UFO and its 12 supporting organizations have been at the forefront of volunteerism, dedicating time and effort to clean our islands, supporting community events, and working with us in the government on policies to better our lives," said Palacios.

"You all played a critical role in our recovery efforts after Super Typhoon Yutu hit our islands, helping many of our residents feel whole again. And for that, you all deserve a round of applause," he added.

FLOODS

From Page 1

triggering a landslide that hit a popular waterfall on the tourist island of Lombok, killing at least three people and damaging hundreds of homes.

The worst-hit area from the flooding was Sentani subdistrict, where tons of mud, rocks and trees from a landslide on a mountain early Sunday rolled down to a river that burst its banks, sweeping away residents, National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho told a news conference in the capital, Jakarta.

Floodwaters and landslides destroyed roads and bridges in several areas of Papua province's Jayapura district following days of torrential rains, hampering rescue efforts, Nugroho said.

"The combination of natural factors and human activities has caused this fatal disaster," he said.

Nugroho said 79 bodies had been pulled from the mud and wreckage of crumpled homes by Sunday. Another 74 people were hospitalized, many with broken bones and head wounds.

Nugroho said the number of dead and injured would likely increase since affected areas had not been reached and rescuers were still searching for dozens of people reportedly still missing.

"We are overwhelmed by too many injuries," said Haerul Lee, the head of the Jayapura health office, adding that some medical facilities had been hit by power outages. "We can't handle it alone."

Papua military spokesman Col. Muhammad Aidi said rescuers saved two injured infants who had been trapped for more than six hours. The parents of one of the babies were washed away and died.

Nugroho said rescuers evacuated more than 4,200 people to temporary shelters as more than 600 houses and buildings were damaged and submerged.

Television footage showed hundreds of rescuers and members of the police and military evacuating residents to shelters at a government office. Others were carrying bodies in black and orange body bags. Ambulances and vehicles were seen carrying victims on muddy roads to several clinics and hospitals.

Seasonal downpours cause frequent landslides and floods and kill dozens each year in Indonesia, a chain of 17,000 islands where millions of people live in mountainous areas or near fertile flood plains.

Meanwhile, a moderately strong earthquake triggered a landslide on Lombok island on Sunday. The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake had a magnitude of 5.5 and struck at a depth of 23 kilometers (15 miles).

The earthquake was felt across the island, located next to Bali, panicking residents still recovering from a major quake last August that killed more than 300 people and left thousands homeless.

Sunday's quake triggered a landslide from Mount Rinjani and hit dozens of tourists at the Tiu Kelep waterfall located in the foothills of the active volcano, said Nugroho, the disaster agency spokesman.

MENTAL

From Page 1

Manglona received a request for the extension last March 11 from the MCFP. The request was dated Feb. 10, 2019.

The judge found a substantial probability that Kaipat will attain the capacity to proceed in this case with an additional 120 days of further treatment and evaluation.

The four-month period of defendant's commitment ended last Feb. 22.

Last Oct. 19, 2016, Manglona found Kaipat mentally incompetent to understand the nature and consequences of the proceedings against him. He was committed to the MCFP on Jan. 23, 2017.

On May 19, 2017, MCFP issued a certificate of competency, establishing that Kaipat was mentally competent for his case to move forward.

In April 2018, Manglona ordered another psychiatric exam because Kaipat's competency was questionable.

Following a competency hearing last Aug. 10, Manglona for a second time, found him mentally incompetent. The judge then committed him to the custody of the U.S. Attorney General for hospitalization and treatment. Kaipat was again at the MCFP last Oct. 25.

In granting the MCFP's request for extension, Manglona said after a court finds a defendant mentally incompetent and commits him, the AG shall generally hospitalize that individual not exceeding four months.

However, the judge said, the court may order an additional period of hospitalization "if the court finds that there is a substantial probability that within such additional period of time [the defendant] will attain the capacity to permit the proceedings to go forward."

In November 2017, Kaipat pleaded guilty in federal court to possession of a stolen firearm—a 9mm Smith and Wesson pistol that he stole while burglarizing Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth Govendo's home on Saipan on Nov. 5, 2015.

In that burglary, he also stole a watch, a hunting knife, and $500 in U.S. currency. Govendo was off-island when the burglary happened.

In the Superior Court case, Kaipat pleaded guilty to burglary and theft as part of a plea deal. In November 2016, Superior Court Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio sentenced him to six years in prison.

The six-year prison sentence, however, will run concurrently with the sentence in Kaipat's conviction in the federal court case. It means that he will serve the six years in prison within whatever prison term the District Court will impose on him.

GRIEVE

From Page 1

in a statement when sought for comments.

American Samoa Delegate Aumua Amata (R-A. Samoa) also issued a statement in the wake of the massacre, saying: "The reports from New Zealand are heartbreaking. We are mourning with them today. In American Samoa, we think of the other Pacific islands as neighbors. …I have had reason to travel to New Zealand. I've met with many of our wonderful community of Samoan friends living there.

"New Zealand is a welcoming and beautiful place, and just days ago, I was speaking with their ambassador to the U.S. about all our countries share. I know that as this sad news reaches everyone in American Samoa that our people will be praying, and we send New Zealand our love," Amata added.

In his statement to *Saipan Tribune*, Jimenez reminded the public to be tolerant of those who hold different religious beliefs.

"We on island are becoming more and more an international, intercultural, and inter-religious society. We are reminded of our own call to show respect for each other while we strive to maintain our own religious and cultural practices," he said.

Northern Marianas International School manager John Joyner and his wife Yasuko Joyner also extended their condolences to the CNMI Muslim community.

"Yasuko and I extend to the NMI Muslim community our condolences and heartfelt sadness. …We weep in solidarity with your pain and outrage," they said.

According to CNN, the massacres occurred on two separate times of the day last Friday. The first was the most deadly and took place at the al-Noor Mosque at 1:30pm in Christchurch.

A few minutes after, a second attack at the Linwood Mosque, also in Christchurch, killed at least seven people, with another dying at the hospital. In total, 50 were killed and another 50 were wounded in the attacks.

CEC

From Page 1

ers from Precinct 3 to exercise their right to vote.

"We're open from 8:30am to 4pm every day until Friday," Igitol said.

Describing it as a low turnout, the first day of early voting last Saturday drew in only 170 votes. Last Sunday had 96 voters.

As of last Jan. 28, there were 3,361 registered voters for Precinct 3. Precinct 3 A covers San Jose/Oleai, while Precinct 3B covers Garapan.

The voting venue for the early voting is at the Garapan Community Development Center, which is located adjacent to the Carolinian Affairs Office, behind the basketball court.

Saipan Tribune learned that a female voter had a minor injury when she tripped near the entrance of the center last Saturday. She refused medical treatment.

Candidates Donald Cabrera Barcinas of the Democratic Party, Marco Taisakan Peter of the GOP, and independent David Castro Sablan put up tents in the vicinity of the polling venue.

Saipan Tribune did not see any tent from the other independent candidate, Mariano DLG Fajardo.

Barcinas, a former representative, believes he has a good chance of winning the election. He said yesterday he has received a lot of positive reaction and feedback from his supporters.

Meanwhile, Northern Mariana Islands Democratic Party chair Nola Kileleman Hix said they were surprised with CEC's disclosure that the results of the March 23 special election will be manually counted.

In her letter last week to CEC executive director Julita Villagomez, Hix said that they delivered a letter to CEC last March 6 expressing their concerns about the procedures for the special election.

Hix said they read in the *Saipan Tribune* the following day, March 7, that quoted Villagomez as saying that no tabulation machine will be used during the special election because the votes will be manually counted.

"This, as the saying goes, was news to us," said the Democratic Party chairwoman.

She said the commission made no attempt to communicate or consult with their party before making that decision.

"Neither are we aware of any meeting of the commission being noticed or held at which such a decision was on the agenda," she said.

Hix said the election law requires that CEC "establish an accounting and tabulation committee composed of not less than five members."

She said they have not submitted names of prospective tabulators for the special election because CEC has not indicated a need for tabulators, and that their understanding and expectation was that the ballots would be tabulated by machine.

Hix said the regulation provides that under the circumstances the primary method cannot be used and that the alternate method must be used, then all ballots in the Commonwealth shall be tabulated and counted by hand.

Accordingly, Hix said, the regulations require that ballots be machine-tabulated unless "the commission decides… that the alternative method must be used."

"To the best of our knowledge, the commission has not made any such decision," she said, adding that the "must be used" language means the CEC must articulate a very substantial reason why manual counting "must be used."

Hix said since CEC began using tabulating machines, it has been constituting itself as the tabulating committee.

While of questionable legality, Hix said this practice has not been challenged in the several elections since it began.

She said this practice would be less problematic if CNMI voters had a full nine-member election commission.

"Unfortunately, this is not the case, and the problem has been exacerbated by the governor's constitutionally infirm removal of one of the commissioners between last year's general election and the present," Hix said.

Quake near Farallon de Pajaros, south of Guam

At 12:50pm yesterday, March 18, a 4.8-magnitude earthquake occurred 199 kilometers north northwest of Farallon de Pajaros in the Northern Islands.

According to CNMI Homeland Security & Emergency Management Emergency Operations Center's State Warning Point, there are no reports of injuries or damage to infrastructure.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center issued no tsunami warnings or advisories.

Last Saturday a 4.9-magnitude earthquake occurred south of Guam, the second earthquake off the coast of Guam this month.

The earthquake occurred at 7:17am on March 16, some 150 miles west southwest of Merizo Village in Guam. There were no tsunami warnings or advisories issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. No injuries were reported.

On March 10, a 4.4-magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Guam but no tsunami warnings were issued for Guam and neighboring Northern Marianas Islands.

For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(Kimberly Bautista)***

Man pleads guilty to beating GF, minor

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
Kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man who allegedly beat his girlfriend and his girlfriend's child back in April 2018 pleaded guilty to aggravated assault and battery last Thursday.

Vincent S. Camacho, 32, was initially charged with assault with a dangerous weapon, assault and battery, criminal mischief, disturbing the peace, and interference with a domestic report.

According to the plea agreement, Camacho will be sentenced to five years in prison, with all but five months suspended. Camacho was also given credit for the five months he has already served.

Camacho will then be placed on three-year probation to run concurrently with his sentence in another case.

Camacho will also pay restitution of $1,727.24 to the victim for medical bills and related expenses.

Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan ordered Camacho to stay away from the victim and their children.

Camacho was also ordered not to drink alcohol or use illegal drugs. In pleading guilty, he also agreed to submit to random testing of his blood, breath, or urine at any time.

At the change of plea hearing on Thursday, Camacho was represented by Shelly O' Neal, while assistant attorney general Chester Hinds appeared for the government.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Camacho was arrested for beating his girlfriend and her child who tried to stop him from beating another woman.

A police officer responded to an assault and battery incident in Chalan Kanoa last April 15, at 11:54pm.

The officer met with a woman who claimed that her boyfriend, Camacho, beat her up and another person.

The officer learned that there was a small gathering at the residence of Camacho's girlfriend in As Perdido. Camacho allegedly threw a can of beer at a woman's face, causing her to fall.

Camacho then began hitting the woman's head with a plastic chair and a cassette recorder. The report did not specify how Camacho is related to the woman.

Camacho's girlfriend tried to stop him, but instead he slammed his girlfriend on the floor.

A 15-year-old child of Camacho's girlfriend also tried to stop Camacho from beating the woman. Camacho, however, also allegedly slammed the child to the floor.

Later, Camacho also tried to punch the woman's son, who tried to call the police. Camacho grabbed the phone from the child and threw it on the road. The phone shattered.

The woman suffered a 1.5-centimeter laceration on the head. She also had bruising and swelling on the right eye.

Pacific SBDC gets 5-year accreditation

Babauta

The Pacific Islands Small Business Development Center network has successfully received a five-year accreditation to operate in Micronesia.

According to CNMI SBDC director Nicole Babauta, the accreditation certifies the Pacific network, which is made up of six SBDC service centers throughout Micronesia.

Babauta said the service centers are funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, with the CNMI center hosted by the CNMI Department of Commerce and additional funding support from the Commonwealth Development Authority.

With this accreditation, the PISBDC has successfully met the standards and requirements set by the SBA and America's Small Business Development Centers.

The accreditation lasts until December 2023 and will undergo a review every five years.

Denise M. Mendiola, PISBDC acting network director and the Guam SBDC director, noted that in October 2018, an accreditation team consisting of other SBDCs contracted by the SBA conducted a site visit and interviewed the PISBDC network staff and advisory board members as well as the center's host, sponsors, and clients to assess the program.

The next five years will bring special focus to food security and regional trade and export.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said that SBDC is a critical partner for locally-owned small businesses.

"From starting a business to managing a business, SBDC has been able to increase access to business training and assist our community in leveraging all available resources to succeed," Torres said.

"We commend the PISBDC network and encourage our community to look into these opportunities to make their business ideas become reality and play an active role in building our economy," said Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios.

Babauta adds that the PISBDC will continue to build strong, effective and functional partnerships while recognizing the cultural diversity of its constituents and will seek to overcome any barriers to their participation in the PISBDCN's programs and activities, including those arising from differences of languages and culture.

The PISBDC network exists to support the growth and economic development of the U.S.-affiliated Pacific Islands in the Western Pacific region by providing training and free business counseling to existing and prospective small businesses.

Under the umbrella of the network lead center are service centers in Guam, Yap, Chuuk, Kosrae, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Palau. PISBDCN is part of the ASBDC network with 1,000 SBDCs within 63 networks across the United States and its territories.

For more information on the Pacific SBDC network, log on to www.pacificsbdc.com or email cnmisbdc@pacificsbdc.com. ***(PR)***

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DPW obtains go-signal to get rid of e-waste

The Department of Public Works' Solid Waste Management Division recently confirmed that electronic waste in the amount of 200 tons has been guaranteed and granted for disposal following the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's acknowledgement of consent and the assistance of the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality.

According to SWMD director Enrique Dela Cruz, the AOC is the approval for waste import/export tracking shipments for off-island recycling.

"E-waste collection has been ongoing following Typhoon Soudelor in 2015 and the effort began as a Federal Emergency Management Agency and DPW 90/10 cost share," Dela Cruz said.

With e-waste continuing to pile up, DPW has contracted Artman Corp. to ship out 10 40-foot shipping containers to the Republic of South Korea at a cost of $13,000 per each container—for a total of $130,000, he added.

Acting Public Works secretary James Ada noted that the division was approved for cathode-ray tube recycling in August 2018.

"With this approval from [EPA], along with the approval of South Korea's Daegu Regional Environmental Agency, we are able to export up to 200 tons of e-waste to alleviate the burden of our landfill. In the last four years, including debris removal during [Super] Typhoon Yutu, this agreement has been a critical part of keeping our solid waste under control and protecting our environment," Ada said.

E-waste collection continues at the transfer station in Lower Base. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The EPA AOC is valid from July 30, 2018 through April 30, 2019.

"At the beginning of this effort, Allied Pacific Environmental Consulting provided three 40-foot shipping containers in 2016. …Artman Corporation supplements the additional need for shipping containers to export more of these waste products," said Gov. Ralph DLG Torres. "I am very pleased that this has been put into place amidst the current recovery efforts of Typhoon Yutu."

While DPW continues to explore more efficient and cost-effective recycling options, this e-waste program has greatly alleviated the Marpi landfill, said Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios

"We are very cognizant of the need to increase the capacity of our landfill but, at the same time, I commend the department for the initiative to continue the current sorting and recycling program and partnership with Korea as we improve our solid-waste management and mitigation efforts," Palacios said.

Dela Cruz added that, as e-waste continues to increase in volume, additional shipping containers may be sought to meet program demands.

"Through a collaborative effort with EPA and BECQ, we have shipped out about [21] 40-foot shipping containers filled with e-waste to the U.S. mainland and more will be shipped out. Currently, 30 containers are waiting for export," Dela Cruz said.

With the AOC from EPA and approval for import from the Republic of South Korea, Dela Cruz says that DPW has also shipped out 10 40-foot shipping containers which weighed a total of 147 tons.

"We're allowed up to 200 tons, but the outlook for e-waste on island is now being handled by EPA and BECQ collection from the Public School System, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., other government agencies, public/private businesses, and the remaining products at the transfer station," he said.

For more information, contact the Solid Waste Management Division in Lower Base at (670) 322-2745/2760. ***(PR)***

MCS Knights shine at MathCourt

Mount Carmel School congratulates its recent MathCourt Knights for their success in recent meets:

INDIVIDUAL RESULTS

- 1st place, Nathaniel Clark (1st place, 6th grade)
- 5th place, Chae Eun Kim (5th place, 5th grade)
- 5th Place, Juncheol Hwang (5th place, 6th grade)

TEAM RESULTS

2nd Place Team (4th – 6th grade)

- Lexi Lansangan (5th grade)
- Leonard Jake Regalado (5th grade)
- Ji Eun Kwon (5th grade)
- Nathaniel Clark (6th grade)

STATE QUALIFIERS (4TH – 6TH GRADE):

- Chae Eun Kim
- Ji Eun Kwon
- Loenard Jake Regalado
- Oscar Buenaflor
- William Cano
- Lexi Lansangan
- Nathaniel Clark
- Jun Cheol Hwang

STATE ROUND (6TH – 8TH GRADE):

- Eun Kyu Hong (1st place, 7th grade)
- Eun Kyu Hong made to be one of the members of Team CNMI to compete in the State in April.
- Paul Angelo Santos (4th place, 7th grade)

Commonwealth Zoning Board
(Zoning Office)
JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Zoning Officer

The Zoning Office is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Zoning Officer. This is a full-time positions on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Duties and Responsibilities: Process permit applications including reviewing applications for compliance, tracking timelines and public notice requirements, coordinating interagency consultations, and preparing written recommendations; Conduct field surveys and inspections for compliance with the Zoning Law and to collect land use information; Educate and inform the public and applicants about the zoning program and permit requirements; Gather information to update the GIS; Maintain detailed records of all actions, using paper and electronic media; Update permit information on the database; Other duties as assigned.

Minimum Requirements: Graduation from an accredited two-year college or university with an AA Degree. The following professional experience may substitute for the AA Degree: A minimum of 3 years of experience in any combination of land use planning, zoning, public administration, public health, business management, public policy, natural resource management, environmental management, land management, or related field; Proficiency with office software including MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook Explorer. Other desired experiences include ability to drive a stick-shift car and to walk into construction sites and across rough terrain; Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing; Ability to work flexible hours, including some evenings and weekends; Ability to speak in Chamorro or Carolinian a plus. Applicant must have a valid CNMI Driver's License.

The salary is $28,000.00. Information about the Zoning Board and the Zoning Office may be viewed at the Zoning Board website: www.zoning.gov.mp. Application submittals should be addressed to the Zoning Administrator. Submittals may be sent via e-mail, FAX, U.S. mail, or hand delivered to the address below. Submittals must include a letter of interest, a CNMI Application For Employment, and a resume. The Application for Employment may be picked up from the Zoning Office or the Office of Personnel Management. Applicants must be US citizens, permanent residents or immediate relatives. Please send submittals to: E-mail: Therese.Ogumoro@zoning.gov.mp or to the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

The deadline to receive applications and all requirements is Thursday, March 21, 2019 at 4:30pm.

Zoning Board

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950 Tel. 670-234-9661, FAX 234-9666
E-mail ZoningBoard@zoning.gov.mp

Mariano Taitano, Treasurer
Joe E. Ayuyu, Jr., Secretary
Patrick Reyes, Member

NOTICE OF PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETINGS FOR SLL 20-25, NUISANCE ABATEMENT & BLIGHTED PROPERTY MAINTENANCE ACT OF 2018

The Zoning Office will be conducting several Public Outreach and Education Awareness meetings at specified locations around the island with community members, businesses, developers, property-owners, or any interested members of the general public. The first meeting to be held at the **Dandan Middle School on Tuesday, March 12, 2019 at 5:30pm.**

These meetings are intended to engage the public and discuss **SLL 20-25 Nuisance Abatement & Blighted Property Maintenance Act of 2018.**

The scheduled public outreach meetings within targeted villages are as follows:

DATE	PLACE	TIME
March 12, 2019 – Tues.	Dandan Middle School cafeteria, Dandan	5:30pm
March 14, 2019 – Thurs.	Saipan Southern High School cafeteria, Koblerville	5:30pm
March 19, 2019 – Tues.	Kagman High School cafeteria, Kagman	5:30pm
March 21, 2019 – Thurs.	Tanapag Middle School cafeteria, Tanapag	5:30pm
April 2, 2019 – Tues.	Multipurpose Center, Susupe	5:30pm
April 9, 2019 – Tues.	GTC Elementary School cafeteria, San Roque	5:30pm
April 16, 2019 – Tues.	Garapan Elementary School cafeteria, Garapan	5:30pm

The Zoning Board and Office encourages the public to join and attend the meetings to learn more about **SLL 20-25 Nuisance Abatement & Blighted Property Maintenance Act of 2018.**

SLL 20-25 may be viewed and downloaded from our website at www.zoning.gov.mp

For more information, please call the Zoning Office at 234-9661 or visit the office located on the 2nd floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building located in Dandan.

Korean celebrities joined Marianas charity tournament

In support of The Marianas' continued recovery from Super Typhoon Yutu, 10 leading Korean celebrities, corporate executives, and national athletes joined the Marianas Charity/Friendship Golf Tournament 2019 on Saipan last Feb. 24, 2019.

The tournament, organized by the Marianas Visitors Authority and held at Laolao Bay Golf & Resort, aimed to showcase the islands and promote Saipan as a golf paradise with beautiful natural scenery.

Participants included Korean top actors Lee Jung Jin, Lee Jae Ryong, Park Kwang Hyun, Lee Sang Hoon; former national basketball player Woo Ji Won; composer Joo Young Hoon, and several corporate representatives.

"With its beautiful coastal cliffs alongside the deep blue Pacific Ocean, Laolao Bay Golf & Resort is a stunning course, and the tournament received positive feedback from participants," said MVA Managing Director Christopher A. Concepcion. "We're happy to hear they were very satisfied with the tournament, and we will use this occasion in continuing to position The Marianas as an ideal golf destination for golfers from around the globe."

On the opening day of the golf tournament, CNMI Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, MVA Board Member Christopher J. Nelson, and Concepcion personally welcomed the Korean delegation. An awards ceremony and banquet were held after the tournament, with the champion receiving a roundtrip ticket from Seoul Incheon to Saipan while other winners received various gifts and prizes supported by T Galleria by DFS. At a brief donation ceremony, the participants presented 10 million KRW—around $9,000—in cash and other donations to the Lady Diann Torres Foundation to aid individuals still recovering after the typhoon.

Scheduled power interruptions

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the public that there will be scheduled power interruptions on the following dates, times and locations:

- **Tuesday, March 19, 2019 — 8am to 4pm**
  - ❏ Outage type: Sectionalized feeder outage on the Kiya 4 distribution circuit
  - ❏ Village location: Chalan Kanoa
  - ❏ Power service area(s) affected: Susupe and Chalan Kanoa
  - ❏ Water service area(s) affected: None
  - ❏ Wastewater service area(s) affected: A-4, A-5, A-6, A-9 and A-11
  - ❏ Work to be performed: Replace two wooden poles with concrete poles
- **Wednesday, March 20, 2019 – 8am to 4pm**
  - ❏ Outage type: Sectionalized feeder outage on the Kiya 1 and Kiya 2 double distribution circuit
  - ❏ Village location: As Terlaje
  - ❏ Power service area(s) affected: As Terlaje and Lower San Vicente
  - ❏ Water well(s) affected: As Terlaje Booster
  - ❏ Water service area(s) affected: None
  - ❏ Wastewater service area(s) affected: W-6
  - ❏ Work to be performed: Replace ten (10) wooden poles with concrete poles
- **Thursday, March 21, 2019 – 8am to 4pm**
  - ❏ Outage type: Sectionalized feeder outage on the Kiya 1 and Kiya 2 double distribution circuit
  - ❏ Village location: As Terlaje
  - ❏ Power service area(s) affected: As Terlaje and Lower San Vicente
  - ❏ Water well(s) affected: As Terlaje Booster
  - ❏ Water service area(s) affected: None
  - ❏ Wastewater service area(s) affected: W-6
  - ❏ Work to be performed: Replace ten (10) wooden poles with concrete poles
- **Saturday, March 23, 2019 – 8am to 4pm**
  - ❏ Outage type: Sectionalized feeder outage on the Feeder 4 distribution circuit
  - ❏ Village location: Kagman Mobile Gas Station and Kagman 1
  - ❏ Power service area(s) affected: Kagman 1, Kagman 2 and Kagman 3
  - ❏ Water well(s) affected: All Kagman Wells
  - ❏ Water service area(s) affected: Entire Kagman Area
  - ❏ Wastewater service area(s) affected: None
  - ❏ Work to be performed: Replace two (2) wooden poles with concrete poles
- **Sunday, March 24, 2019 – 8am to 4pm**
  - ❏ Outage type: Sectionalized feeder outage on the Feeder 4 distribution circuit
  - ❏ Village location: Kagman 1 and Kagman 2
  - ❏ Power service area(s) affected: Kagman 1, Kagman 2 and Kagman 3
  - ❏ Water well(s) affected: All Kagman wells except KG-2, KG-3, KG-4, KG-10 and KG-131
  - ❏ Water service area(s) affected: Entire Kagman Area
  - ❏ Wastewater service area(s) affected: None
  - ❏ Work to be performed: Replace seven (7) wooden poles with concrete poles

The purpose of the scheduled power interruptions is to de-energize utility lines and allow power line workers from the company Primary Source Electric to safely replace wooden poles with concrete ones. This is a continuation of CUC's ongoing restoration effort, which is aimed at hardening and strengthening the power distribution system affected by Super Typhoon Yutu.

Because of the scale of work that will be performed, CUC asks travelers to take alternate routes or to exercise caution when driving through the working area.

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Call Center (664-4282) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/). ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-19-006

KAGMAN WATERLINE AND BOOSTER STATION REHABILITATION

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Kagman Waterline and Booster Station Rehabilitation on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, on the installation of a new booster station to replace the existing Kumoi pump station. The work also includes and connection of a new 8-inch PVC transmission line and a new 6-inch PVC distribution line complete with all necessary valves, fittings, and appurtenances. It will also involve the rehabilitation of the existing deep well KG-131 and the reconnection of all customers onto new or existing waterlines within the project area. The Contractor shall complete the work in accordance with the plans, specifications and terms of the contract.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), and the United States Office of Insular Affairs (US OIA) thru the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Island (CNMI) Capital Improvement Project Office (CIP). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA and the CNMI CIP Office.

*CUC requires the Project to be completed in **300 calendar days** from date of award of contract.*

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **February 28, 2019 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Conference Room No.15, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk or USB Drive in PDF format must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-IFB-19-006- Kagman Waterline and Booster Station Rehabilitation"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 21, 2019**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A *Bid Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States, Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 7, 2018** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, at email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to LCDR Travis Spaeth, CUC Water/Wastewater Senior Engineer at email travis.spaeth@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Administrative Support Assistant at email christie.sablan@cucgov.org

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works
2nd Floor Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW19-IFB-010

TANDUKI DRIVE ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Governor Ralph Dlg. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for **Tanduki Drive Road Improvement Project**, Saipan Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after **March 12, 2019** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars ($100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Teasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations currently in effect."

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITUES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **April 2, 2019**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **April 9, 2019** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

Prospective bidders should examine and review the invitation for bids with care. If it should appear to a prospective bidder that the performance of the work under the contract or any of the matters relative thereto is not sufficiently described or explained in the invitation for bids, or that any discrepancy exists between different parts of the invitation for bids, or that full intent of the invitation for bids is not clear, then the prospective bidder shall submit a written request for clarification no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening at 4:30 pm to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

The prospective bidder shall examine carefully the site of the proposed work and the invitation for bids before submitting a bid.

The Contracting Officer (CO) may, upon recommendation of the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), issue an addendum notifying all prospective bidders known to have received an invitation for bids, or if issued after the deadline for submission of the notice of intention to bid, to those persons who submitted such notice, of any changes to the invitation for bids. The Department of Public Works will make every reasonable attempt to notify all persons who obtained the invitation for bids from the Technical Services Division by telephone to pick up the addendum or if the CO chooses, the addendum may be mailed or delivered personally or by facsimile machine. If the bid proposal requires the acknowledgment of addenda, the prospective bidder shall indicate the date of each addendum in the space provided. **It shall be the prospective bidder's responsibility to confirm the existence of any addendum by telephoning the COTR at (670) 234-9828/9838 no later than ten (10) Calendar days before the scheduled bid opening**.

Sealed bids must be marked **"DPW19-IFB-010"**. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply, located at the former Emergency Management Office, Ascencion Drive, Building No. 1301, Capitol Hill, Saipan, no later than **10:00 a.m. local time April 12, 2019**. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than **10:00 a.m. local time, April 12, 2019**, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to **procurement@cnmidof.net**. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **April 12, 2019** and the BID documents must be received at the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than **April 24, 2019**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply, located at the former Emergency Management Office, Ascencion Drive, Building No. 1301, Capitol Hill, Saipan, at 10:00 a.m. local time, April 29, 2019. However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at **10:30 a.m. local time, on April 12, 2019**.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars **($25,000.00)** a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. **Bid security shall be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashiers check or other form acceptable to the government. A surety company shall hold the certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety requiring approval of the Attorney General must be pre-approved prior to bid submission**. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the

face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations **§70-30.3-245**. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00. Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
b) A certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceed the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P&S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract.

Acceptable assets are only:

1) Cash
2) US Gov't Securities
3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is **Sixty (60) calendar days** upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages for delays beyond the established completion date will be assessed at the rate of **One Hundred (US$100.00)** for each and every day the work is delayed beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

JAMES A. ADA
Secretary of Public Works

JOE A. TUDELA
Acting Director of Procurement & Supply

NMIS Field Trip

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Northern Marianas International School students listen as a park ranger from the American Memorial Park explains the importance of the facility during their field trip last week.

NMIS students learn the history of World War II and the role that the islands played.

NMIS vice principal Jener Pineda, left, joins NMIS students and teachers for a group photo outside the American Memorial Park Visitor Center.

Some NMIS students read the names etched on the wall of local residents who died during World War II.

NMIS students are all smiles as they get on board the Woody Duck Army boat.

CNMI Museum director Danny Aquino, third from left, joins CNMI Museum staff and NMIS students for a group photo.

NMIS students enjoy a ride at the Woody Duck Army boat.

Archie Ajoste, left, answers some of the questions of NMIS students during their tour inside the CNMI Museum.

Archie Ajoste, right, of the CNMI Museum watches as some NMIS students check out one of their displays inside the museum.

Some NMIS students check out one of the ancient Chamorro artifacts inside the CNMI Museum.

25 students inducted into MCS National Honor Society

MCS
The 25 new inductees into Mount Carmel School's Sacred Heart Chapter of the National Honor Society gathered at the altar of the Mount Carmel Cathedral after this year's ceremony welcoming them into the chapter.

Twenty-five high school students were inducted into Mount Carmel School's Sacred Heart Chapter of the National Honor Society in a ceremony held this past week at Mount Carmel Cathedral.

The ceremony was led by Bishop Ryan P. Jimenez, school administrators, and society officers, and was honored by the presence of acting Education commissioner Jackie Quitugua.

The inductees were selected by a faculty council that reviewed applications from sophomores and upperclassmen who had maintained a grade point average of 3.0 and had demonstrated how they had fulfilled the society's values of scholarship, service, leadership, and character.

This year's inductees are Jaeleen Aldan, Maria Ayuyu, Seung Bin Bae, Eunseo Choi, Erika Cunanan, Kalyn Diaz, Mateo Guerrero, Brandee Hunter, Danishelle Javillonar, Angela Jun, Minju Kang, Emmaline Lee, Christine Mago, Mikee Mendoza, Jan Mathew Millo, Amanda Pangelinan, Joanna Marie Pangelinan, Carmille Perez, Katelyn Rabang, Penelope Sablan, Vince Salvador, John San Nicolas, Victoria Nicole Santos, Anniea Sofia Saturno, and Katherine Woodruff.

The keynote speaker for the ceremony was Christopher Ching, CNMI Public School System director of Finance.

An MCS alumni, or Alum-Knight, and former member of the Sacred Heart Chapter, Ching shared his own story about how he struggled for years to earn induction into the honor society.

"Over the years, becoming the adult that I am, I realized life is really not about whether we become the most successful student but rather that we find happiness and fulfillment in the things that we do; that we build our character, and become of service to others," Ching told inductees.

In his closing remarks, school president Galvin Deleon Guerrero shared the Greek myth of Narcissus, who was cursed by his own beauty to stare at his reflection until he starved to death. Encouraging students to be less narcissistic and more Socratic, Delelon Guerrero told them, "Be less selfish and more selfless and, above all, remember what Socrates taught us: 'The unexamined life is not worth living.'"

After the ceremony, the inductees and their families were treated to light refreshments at the Joeten Daidai Social Hall.

Established in 1921, the National Honor Society is the nation's premier organization that recognizes outstanding high school students, with more than one million student members who demonstrate the society's trademark values of scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Mount Carmel School's Sacred Heart Chapter of the NHS was opened in 1997. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
P.O. Box 502149, Saipan MP 96950
Tel.: (670) 234-6245/6293/7145/7146 • Fax: (670) 235-7147
Website: www.cda.gov.mp

INVITATION FOR BIDS
2019-CDA-10-IFB

SUBMISSION AND OPENING
CLOSING DATE: Friday, April 5, 2019 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE FOR 29 SPLIT TYPE AIR CONDITION UNITS"

A copy of the bid may be picked up at the Commonwealth Development Authority (CDA), Saipan Office, 2nd floor, CDA Building, Oleai, Saipan during regular working hours. The bid may also be obtained on our website at www.developcnmi.com.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTIONS 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any and all bids and proposals in whole or in part, and to waive any imperfection in a bid in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All bids shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/s/ MANUEL A. SABLAN
Executive Director

/s/ JOSEPH A. TUDELA
Acting Director, Procurement & Supply

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-19-015

ROTA WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS PHASE 2 PROJECT (W17-053)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Rota Water System Improvements Phase 2 Project in Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, in general installation of gate valve assembly, PRV installations, PRV CMU protective boxes, fencing, restoration of existing asphalt concrete road; and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **365 calendar** days from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **March 13th, 2019 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Rota Directors Office, Sinapalo, Rota.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk or USB Drive in PDF format must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-19-015, Rota Water System Improvements Phase 2 Project",** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on April 4, 2019**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A *Bid Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States, Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 21, 2019** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email at manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to LCDR Travis Spaeth, CUC Water/Wastewater Senior Engineer via email at travis.spaeth@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Administrative Support Assistant via email at christie.sablan@cucgov.org

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

EMERGENCY REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-19-013

AGINGAN PRIMARY SCREEN PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified vendors for the attainment of a Primary Screen for the Agingan Wastewater Treatment Plant at CUC Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one RFP package set. The RFP package consisting of the specifications and scope-of-work will be emailed to all registered prospective proposers email ID. Prospective Proposers must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division.

One (1) original and four (5) hard copies, along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk or USB Drive in PDF format must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-RFP-19-013, Agingan Primary Screen Project"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **March 21, 2019 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

A *Proposal Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total proposal price must accompany the proposals. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or proposal bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful Proposer. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Proposers are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. Offerors shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion and revision of proposals, and such revision may be permitted after submission and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining the best and final offers. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing offerors.

All Offeror are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Offeror are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All responses to this RFP should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the proponent awarded a contract. Successful proponents will be required to submit a copy of a valid CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor's Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, upon award of the contract. The Contractor and all subcontractors will be obligated to pay wage rates not less than the current CNMI minimum wage, prevailing through the period of contract, as indicated in the web page: https://marianaslabor.net/. The proponents shall be required to comply with all applicable CNMI and Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 7, 2019** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator at email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Westen Knudsen, P.E., Senior Engineer for Water/Wastewater at email address westen.knudsen@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrative Technician, Senior at email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
editor@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

College admissions scandal is just tip of the iceberg

So it turns out helicopter parents with money to burn can create a hot mess in the college and university admissions process.

Who knew?

Most parents with high school-age students understand the college-entry scandal that led to 50 arrests Tuesday is just the tip of the iceberg in a system rife with elitism. The only shocking aspect of the story was just how low wealthy and celebrity parents were willing to go to get their underperforming darlings entry into prestigious colleges and universities.

The Justice Department investigation should be just the start. State and federal lawmakers must next examine ways to level the playing field.

The challenge is massive, especially in a private university world highly dependent on wealthy donors. The inequity of a system deceptively billed as a meritocracy is appalling.

The favoritism exacerbates the nation's growing economic divide, rewarding those families who can buy admission at the expense of those who can't. For every undeserving student who gains admission to a prestigious school there is an accomplished child who had the door slammed in his or her face, denying a rightful opportunity for advancement.

The focus Tuesday was on Hollywood actresses Felicity Huffman and Lori Loughlin and the dozen or so Bay Area parents who were also charged in the scheme. Social media had a field day with posts condemning the extent of their outrageous acts.

But their behavior was only a symptom of a much greater disease: The cutthroat nature of the college and university admissions system encourages parents to go to greater and greater lengths to give their kids an edge.

For example, pricey club sports are designed specifically to give children a better chance of winning an athletic scholarship. Traveling soccer, baseball, volleyball and basketball programs charge parents thousands of dollars a year to increase the odds their children will be "seen" by a Division 1 coach of a prestigious university—to provide privileged kids a greater chance for admission through sports for which they might not qualify through academics.

Another example: Parents spend thousands of dollars on private consultants who "help" students prepare their resumes, write their essays and tutor them on how to take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). The college prep market is a $12 billion industry.

The College Board that organizes and administers the SAT admitted in 2017 that students who can afford academic tutors register an average gain of more than 100 points on their scores.

And then there are the parents who can afford to write big donation checks to gain their children immediate favor. Or the "legacy" parents who were privileged enough to attend an elite school and pass on that privilege to their children.

A study of Harvard University revealed that legacy students made up a third of its admissions, and that legacy students had an acceptance rate five times higher than non-legacy applicants.

The main difference between these parents and the ones arrested Tuesday is that one method of gaining favoritism is legal and the other isn't.

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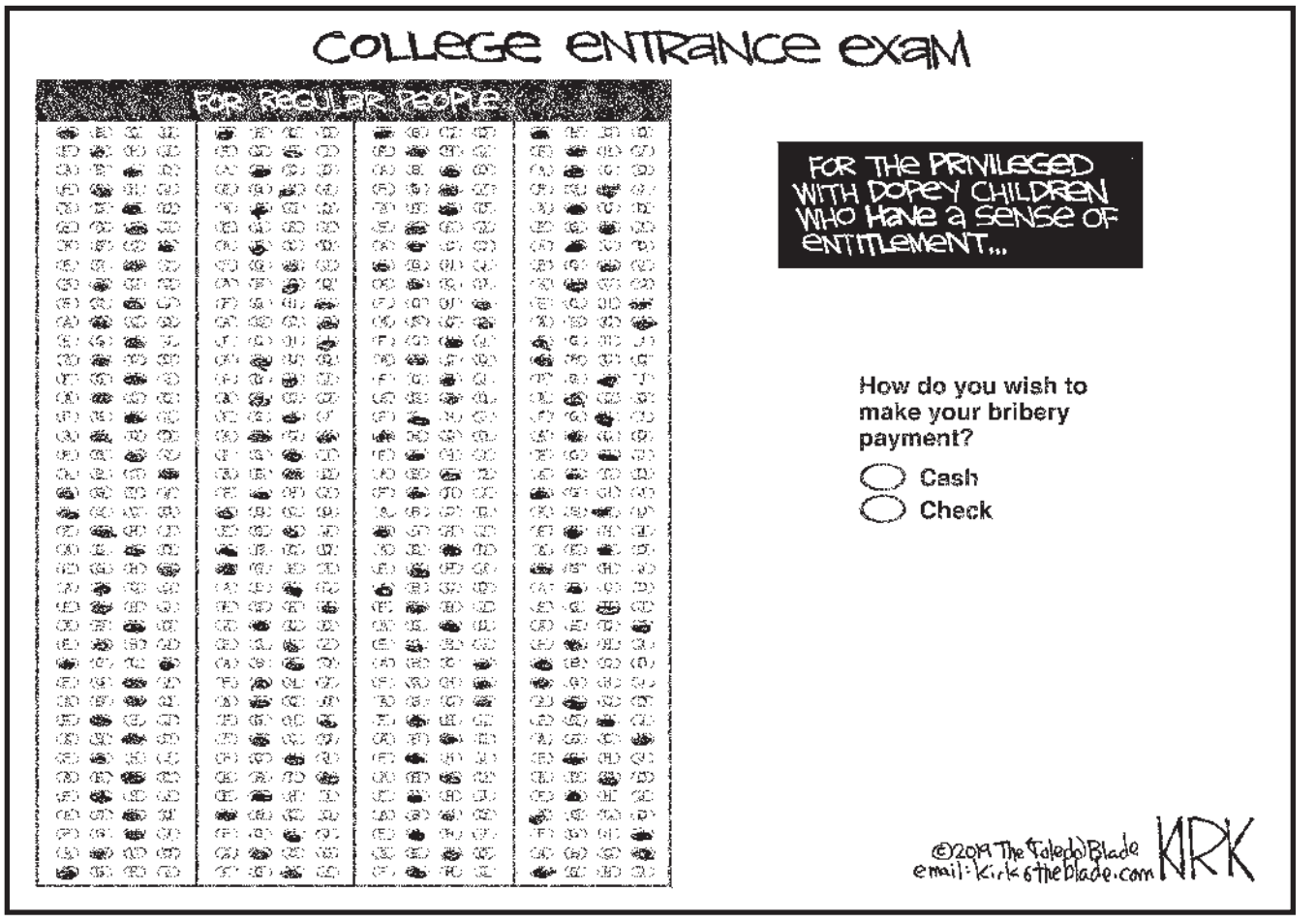

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAM
FOR REGULAR PEOPLE
FOR THE PRIVILEGED WITH DOPEY CHILDREN WHO HAVE A SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT...
How do you wish to make your bribery payment?
Cash
Check
©2019 The Toledo Blade
email: kirk@theblade.com
KIRK

Your kids are absolutely right to go on strike

By CHRIS BRYANT
Bloomberg News

Chris Bryant is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering industrial companies. He previously worked for the Financial Times.

John Lanchester's new novel "The Wall" imagines Britain after "The Change." Following a dramatic shift in temperature and sea levels, the U.K. has barricaded off what remains of the coastline; in Lanchester's dystopia, there aren't any beaches left.

Young citizens bore no responsibility for any of this, but they're the ones who must guard the wall and violently repel increasingly desperate migrants, known as "The Others." If they fail, the young are themselves cast out to sea as punishment. Not surprisingly, they're pretty unhappy about their lot.

"None of us can talk to our parents," says Kavanagh, the novel's protagonist. "It's guilt: mass guilt, generational guilt. The olds feel they irretrievably f_d up the world, then allowed us to be born into it. You know what? It's true. That's exactly what they did. They know it, we know it. Everybody knows it."

It's a sentiment shared no doubt by the schoolchildren who protested around the world last Friday to demand far more decisive action on climate change. Inspired by 16-year old Greta Thunberg's weekly vigil outside Sweden's parliament, the movement has expanded to dozens of countries, including the U.S. Thunberg has been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.

Can you really blame the kids? The planet has warmed by "only" about 1 degree Celsius (1.8 Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times and yet the destructive effects of climate change have become frighteningly apparent. The heatwaves, floods, deadly wildfires and violent hurricanes we've experienced lately are mild compared to what our children will contend with. The world is on track to heat up by more than 3 degrees by 2100 and the warming won't miraculously stop then.

"The climate system that raised us, and raised everything we now know as human culture and civilization, is now, like a parent, dead," writes David Wallace-Wells in "The Uninhabitable Earth." Unfortunately, this isn't another Lanchester-like work of speculative fiction. It's non-fiction.

Wallace-Wells's book documents the horrors and chaos that those cutting class on Friday want to avoid: Tens of millions of climate refugees, trillions of dollars of economic damage, deadly heat, fresh-water scarcity (the glaciers of the Himalayas will lose at least 40 percent of their ice by 2100, he notes) and "much more fire, much more often, burning much more land." A single California wildfire can undo all the emissions gains made that year via the state's environmental policies, just one of several terrifying climate feedback loops he describes.

Wallace-Wells's writing is of course more vivid than the conservative, consensus-driven reports produced by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. A journalist, not a scientist, he makes no attempt to hide his alarm nor pull his punches about who to blame. Why should he?

More than half of fossil fuel-related emissions have occurred in the past 30 years, during which humans have known this will make the earth far less hospitable. Thanks to Asian demand, we consume 80 percent more coal today than in 2000. Destroying the environmental conditions that gave rise to the human species "has been the work of a single generation," Wallace-Wells writes.

We adults are proud of the progress we've made in other areas – life expectancy, equal rights, education and poverty, to name a few. But when later historians write about this period, that isn't what they'll remember. Despite the rapid adoption of wind and solar power, big improvements in energy efficiency and electric vehicles, our carbon emissions are still rising. We're locking in more destruction for our kids to cope with.

Linking the Fridays For Future movement and young people's enthusiasm for policies like the Green New Deal is the belief that the time for incrementalism is over. Yet governments and corporate bosses continue to drag their heels. Even those, like Germany's Angela Merkel, who support the kids' right to protest are guilty. Supposedly a climate leader, Germany is recklessly phasing out nuclear power but plans to continue burning coal for another two decades.

Car manufacturers like Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV tout their electric plans while gorging on U.S. truck and SUV sales. In mining, Glencore Plc is committed to capping coal production at current levels to appease climate-concerned investors, yet it expects fat profits from coal this year, and probably will for years to come. Airlines talk about carbon offsets but they're banking on so much growth that their emissions might rise sevenfold by 2050.

Telling teenagers to be patient or realistic, as U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein tried to do, won't wash. With the United Nations warning that we have only 12 years to fix the crisis, kids aren't inclined to hang around.

It's even more reprehensible that some adults are trying to stymie even our insufficient climate-change efforts, by maligning experts and retreating from international cooperation. President Donald Trump, who wants to withdraw from the Paris climate accord, happily expresses his skepticism about the science, but often demonstrates his total ignorance of the subject in the process.

His rise showed the oncoming cataclysm still wasn't a big enough priority for many Americans of voting age in 2016. If he's reelected in 2020, the die casting today's adults as climate villains will have been cast. Three cheers for the kids, then.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey "Pepe Batbon" Connolly is a retired teacher and poet living on Tinian who taught English in CNMI public schools for the past 30 years. He has also taught in Alaska, New Orleans, and Las Vegas.

Equinoxial Perspectives

Paralysis, Persistence, Progress

In the ground in a frozen land of mud and dirt
those who chose hibernation near the surface
earthworms slowly come out of relative paralysis
sucking in muddy earth churned by footprints
persisting and surfacing into warm sunlight
only to have their struggles seen from a
birds eye perspective view from the barn
or any number of nearby budding treetops
birds sweep down before the worms escape
worms provide breakfast for her three fledglings
they open their mouths with mute begging
mother provides them with juicy worm segments
from the bird mother's perspective life continues
from worm's segmented existence more sediment.

a boy shoots a few ducks and shore birds along
the pond and river nearby his home in the valley
a meager meal for his two brothers and sisters
Mother makes some hearty cornmeal pancakes
delicious smothered with blackstrap molasses
they have hot cups of cocoa late that afternoon
with saltine crackers and peanut butter on top
Daddy brings a spring buck deer into the basement
spills its guts open filling the room with pine needle
scent from its last hillside forest meal out back
I take the hot deer liver upstairs to my mother
she cuts it into half inch slices dredges it in flour
fries it in hot bacon grease in a cast iron skillet
its gone within an hour of coming into the house.
Spring comes to northern Appalachia in early March
throughout the Allegheny Plateau trees are red in bud.

Writes of Spring: Forward March

"Spring has returned. The Earth is like a child that knows poems."
—Rainer Maria Rilke, born Prague 1875, died Montreux 1926

The Ides of March has Caesar salad as a daily lunch special
The rides of March have rabbits hopping down the bunny trail
During glides in March fruit bats come home late to hang out
March finds worms covering holes with their own excrement
The tides of March reveal many sea cucumbers on the beach
The bona fides of March always has Spring growth on the menu
Stravinski's Rite of Spring is a ballet about the creativity of Spring
The sights of Spring sooth many sore eyes tired of dark Winter
The rights of Spring bring green growth and life over natural death
Many nights of Spring bring cool temperatures and misty mornings
The delights of Spring bring wildflower blooms in desert places
The fights of Spring are eternal between budding growth and frost
The mights of Spring are manifested by flora bursting from earth
The plights of Spring bring its demise as warm days bring Summer.

Why the Robert Kraft bust matters

By RICH LOWRY
(c) 2019 by King Features Synd., Inc.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

Robert Kraft's name will now long be associated with one of the most despicable scourges of modern life, and rightly so.

The New England Patriots owner is charged with soliciting prostitution at a Florida massage parlor busted as part of a sex-trafficking ring. Kraft denies it, although the police in Jupiter, Florida, say they have video evidence.

The charges against him, and two other high-flying men from the financial world, represent an important front in the fight against sex trafficking. Authorities should be doing everything they can to crack down on the supply of trafficked women—via the networks that often import them to the U.S. and force them into prostitution—but also exacting a price from the men who constitute the demand.

To their credit, authorities undertook a monthslong investigation of the Orchids of Asia spa, where strangely the only customers were male, and dozens of similar operations. They placed cameras inside and charged hundreds of men. (The agency that Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and other progressives want to abolish, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, assisted on the case.)

The Orchids of Asia spa was in an unremarkable strip mall in a tony area of Florida, neighboring businesses included an Outback Steakhouse and a surf shop. Beneath the veneer of normality there existed a sink of degradation.

The women were lured from China with promises of legitimate work and then trapped in a life of sexual slavery. Sex with up to a thousand men a year. No change of clothes. Sleep on massage tables. Food from hot plates at the back of the parlor. Moved around from one parlor to the next as pawns of the traffickers.

And this is a major business. According to the anti-trafficking group Polaris, the country's 9,000 illicit massage parlors make $2.5 billion a year.

They are such a lucrative industry only because the Robert Krafts of the world are patrons. He is a billionaire, famous and the owner of one of the most successful franchises in sports. He presumably has access to women, indeed dates an actress and dancer nearly 40 years younger than he is. He doesn't have to go to a strip-mall massage parlor for sex.

Except that it's impossible to find women who are so thoroughly disposable as those compelled to perform sex acts at the likes of the Orchids of Asia spa. The commercial transaction lent a veneer of consent to a sexual exchange where only one party was exercising volition—the men who showed up, paid $100 or $200 and then went on their way.

They are the appropriate target of law enforcement. In Illinois, Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart has been a national leader in making it a priority to go after the buyers of sex, while offering help to prostitutes.

It will, of course, never be possible to end demand for trafficked women. But as with domestic violence, the law can be used as a tool of social disapproval to change how the culture regards prostitution, achieving clarity on who are the victims and the victimizers. Everyone who availed themselves of the Orchids of Asia spa, not just the monsters profiting from it, is the latter.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The *man'amko* are also learners

Visiting the "outdated' items shelves at the markets is one of the major pastimes of my sheltered life. Usually the items are displayed with a date of issue and a date of expiration. The notion is that the highest value of the item is somewhere between those two dates, a value that decreases rapidly in worth as the date of expiration approaches.

In our schools, we assign children classes based often on their date of issue, add a comment or two about accompanying value to society in the child's matching herself with what's determined to be her "potential." Through the education process we then measure that worth and value for a couple of decades, or until the date it is determined her potential has expired.

Likewise, the community acknowledges a date of issue for special members we call *man'amko*, although we tend to withhold from them the respect of their being endowed with a potential afforded the child. We relate to the *man'amko* as though they have already reached their date of expiration and therefore have no further contributory value to the community. Learning does not have a date of expiration.

At NMIS, we practice lifelong learning; we honor the *man'amko*. And, we are restructuring our offerings to welcome attendance of *man'amko* as active participants in the Information Age and the use of computers and other technological devices in their daily lives.

John B. Joyner
Manager, NMIS

Bennett girls continue to accomplish new goals

This is two proud parents' update on the Bennett girls who are still plowing ahead with accomplishments and representing the CNMI. We are sharing this not only out of our love and pride in our children but we are always asked about them and we hope this will update their fans and supporters. We also hope this will help to inspire other CNMI youths to shoot for the moon and the stars beyond the CNMI.

Yvonne is still pursuing her acting career while managing a retail store and she is doing very good with her acting career as her new agent is keeping her busy. She just finished working on the movie Stalker at the end of last year in which she was the leading supporting actress again and the movie is now in theaters and hopefully will come to Saipan.

Yvonne has been doing a lot of local Utah commercials and even an event in Las Vegas where she modeled. She was more recently hired to do a national commercial for "Ancestry" which you can see on TV or at https://youtu.be/kxGTOLJVPSw. Yvonne also did a national commercial recently for "Pure Cam," a car security system which you can also see at https://youtu.beFvgDoBp7QJ8. The great news is the movie Stalker that Yvonne is in has been nominated for seven awards in the Utah Film Festival and Yvonne has been nominated for "Best Supporting Actress." The festival itself will be held on April 4 to 6 in Provo Utah. If you want to know more about the Utah Film Festival & Awards and the films and actors/actresses that have been nominated you can view at http://www.theutahfilmawards.com/2019-nominees/.

Yvette, a former Miss Idaho USA, is now living in New Jersey but she works right across the bridge in New York, managing a fitness club. She has also found her niche for modeling in New York as is now modeling all kinds of things for national advertisements, from eyeglasses to swimsuits. More recently, Yvette entered a national bathing suit competition that will be held in Miami, Florida, at the Grand Beach Hotel, Miami Beach, from July 9 to 12. The swimsuit competition is part of "Miami Swim Week" activities and you can find out more about the competition at https://missbikinius.com/miami-swim-week.html.

Finally, our oldest daughter Shequita, former Miss Marianas Universe, remarried in an awesome ceremony to a retired U.S. Air Force pilot (Sam Kirby) in Cancun, Mexico, last November. She is presently a sergeant in the Air Force but she is preparing to take the test and meet the requirements to be a lieutenant as she plans to make a career in the Air Force.

We are sure the supporters of our daughters will appreciate this update and we are hopeful that it will help to capture and inspire the minds and hearts of other CNMI youth to shoot for the moon and the stars.

Thank you, CNMI, for supporting our daughters as they continue representing us and our islands.

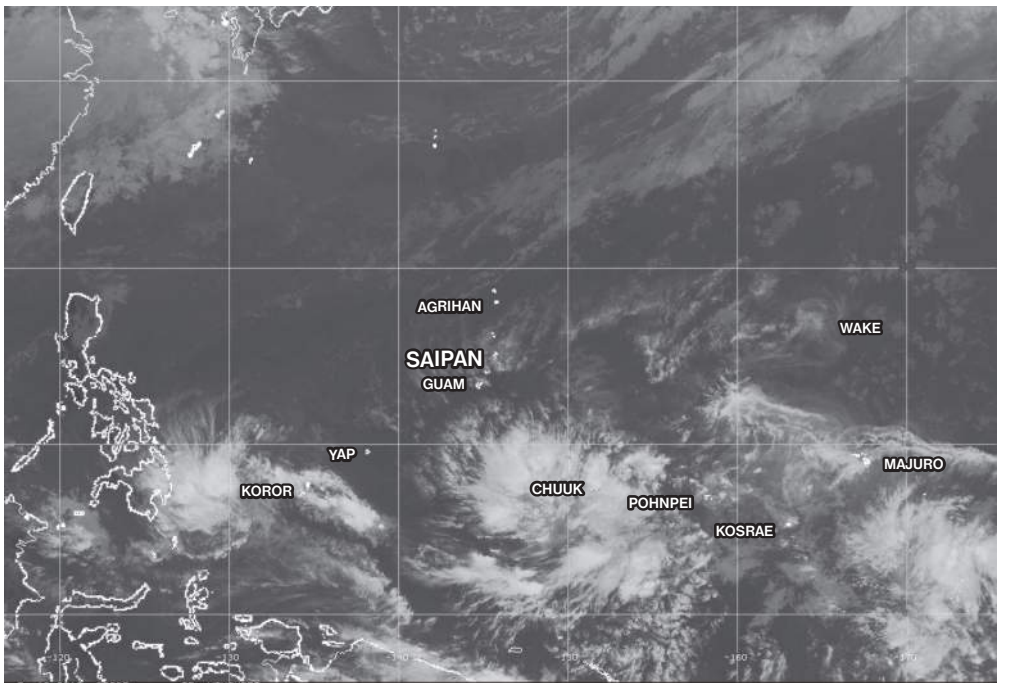
Ambrose and Lillian Bennett
Kagman, Saipan

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of light showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of light showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of light showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of light showers.
88º / 77º	87º / 77º	87º / 77º	88º / 77º	88º / 77º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:38 AM, MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2019

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Andersen Air Force Base Doppler weather radar shows isolated showers moving through the Marianas waters, mainly near Rota at this time. The VAD wind profile indicates east-northeast winds of 14 to 22 knots through the lowest 8 thousand feet of the air. The buoys reveal combined seas of 6 to 8 feet composed mainly of east trade-wind swell and east-northeast wind waves.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Showers	84° / 76°
Palau	Showers	84° / 77°
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	83° / 79°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Majuro	Showers	84° / 79°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	84° / 79°
Beijing	Cloudy	66° / 43°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	75° / 70°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	81° / 65°
London	Mostly Cloudy	57° / 46°
Los Angeles	Sunny	78° / 57°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	91° / 77°
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	79° / 61°
Miami	Rain	71° / 66°
New York	Partly Cloudy	47° / 30°
Osaka	Showers	63° / 52°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	57° / 39°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	63° / 57°
Rome	Partly Cloudy	61° / 46°
Salem	Mostly Sunny	61° / 37°
San Francisco	Sunny	67° / 53°
Seoul	Rain	64° / 46°
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	66° / 54°
Washington, DC	Sunny	53° / 34°

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
12:06 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.32
6:58 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.99
12:42 PM	LOW TIDE	0.90
5:58 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.99

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:22 AM	6:27 PM
Wednesday	6:21 AM	6:27 PM
Thursday	6:21 AM	6:27 PM
Friday	6:20 AM	6:28 PM
Saturday	6:19 AM	6:28 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	4:44 AM	4:41 PM
Wednesday	-	5:36 AM	5:44 PM
Thursday	-	6:25 AM	6:44 PM
Friday	-	7:12 AM	7:44 PM
Saturday	-	7:58 AM	8:42 PM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 5, 2019

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:15am	9:55am	Daily
UA105	6:25pm	7:05pm	2, 4

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:15am	6:30am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
7C3403	4:35am	8:25am	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:50am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)

JD396	7:30am	11:00am	1
JD396	4:50pm	7:55pm	4

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:30am	7:55am	2, 6

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	6:35am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	9:15am	9:00pm	Daily via GUM
UA117/193	9:15am	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA105/1936:25pm		11:50pm	2 via GUM-ROR

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX077	1:50am	5:15am	1, 4
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UO43	5:45am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7
UA117/159	9:15am	9:55pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA105/159	6:25pm	11:00pm	2, 4 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	7:30am	8:11am	Daily
UA104	4:50pm	5:31pm	2, 4

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35pm	2:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:20pm	4:50am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN

JD395	8:05am	3:30pm	4
JD395	9:35pm	5:00am+1	7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:55pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:40pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA182/174	00:40am	8:11am+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA192/174	9:45pm	8:11am+1	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
PR110/UA174	10:05pm	8:11am+1	Daily via GUM
UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
HX076	5:15pm	00:15am+1	3, 7
UO42	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
UO42	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6
UA116/174	10:50pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/174	11:45pm	8:11am+1	2, 4 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, PR PAL Express; ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The* Saipan Tribune *is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

Business

Group with consumer-friendly vibe pushes drugmakers

WASHINGTON (AP)—As ominous music plays in the background, the narrator of a radio ad echoes objections from drugmakers by warning that a Trump administration proposal to apply international pricing to certain Medicare drugs would be a nightmare for seniors.

The one-minute spot is the handiwork of the Alliance for Patient Access, a nonprofit group that gives off a consumer-friendly vibe yet is bankrolled by the powerful pharmaceutical industry. It's also closely aligned with a Washington lobbying and public relations firm, Woodberry Associates, whose president, Brian Kennedy, is the nonprofit's executive director. As Congress and the Trump administration aim to lower prescription drug costs, outside groups like the Alliance for Patient Access are seeking to sway the outcome. But not all of these organizations are clear about who they actually represent. Their names can obscure the source of the message and they're cagey about where they get their funding.

AP
In this June 15, 2018 photo, pharmaceuticals are seen in North Andover, Mass.

Yet even a small degree of separation can be valuable for pharmaceutical companies at a time when the industry faces stiff political headwinds. Drug prices may provide a rare bipartisan issue on which Congress and the White House could collaborate on legislation ahead of the 2020 elections. In a prelude of sorts, the Senate Finance Committee last month grilled drug company executives over the cost of their products.

Anger is bubbling up from their constituents. A February poll by the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation found nearly one in four Americans taking prescription drugs have difficultly affording their medications. Although majorities of the public trust pharmaceutical companies to develop new and effective drugs, only 25 percent trust them to price their products fairly — down from 41 percent in 2008.

Susan Hepworth, a spokeswoman for the Alliance and Woodberry, described the nonprofit as "a national network of physicians that advocates for patient access to the medicines they prescribe."

Through the Alliance, she said, doctors "can share their perspectives about the benefits of respecting the physician-patient relationship, clinical decision making and personalized, patient-centered health care." It's no surprise, Hepworth said, that the group's backers include companies that manufacture medicines.

She declined to answer questions about the radio ad. The one-minute spot singles out for criticism a Trump administration proposal to gradually shift Medicare payments for drugs administered in doctors' offices to a level based on international prices.

Prices in other countries are lower because governments directly negotiate with manufacturers. But drugmakers have assailed the Trump plan, arguing it smacks of government price-setting and would lead to socialized health care.

The Alliance's radio spot makes the same argument, using nearly identical language. Under the Trump proposal, the ad says, "cancer treatment would be paid based on rates from countries with European-style health care, where access to new medicine is rationed and patients often wait months for care."

Tax filings for 2015 through 2017, the most recent available, show the Alliance has paid Woodberry's consultants more than $1 million. Brendan Fischer of the nonpartisan Campaign Legal Center said the transactions may raise red flags.

"Nonprofits are supposed to promote social welfare, not operate to provide a private benefit to any person or entity," Fischer said. "A nonprofit could run afoul of tax law if it is substantially benefiting a nonprofit officer's for-profit consulting firm."

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Maine lawmakers looking to get teenagers involved in logging

BANGOR, Maine (AP)—A pair of Maine lawmakers wants to get more of the state's teenagers interested in logging. Logging has a long history in deeply forested Maine. Independent Sen. Angus King and Democratic Rep. Jared Golden say they're introducing legislation designed to "level the playing field for the logging trade with other agricultural fields."\ The lawmakers say their Future Loggers Careers Act would allow 16- and 17-year-olds to learn logging under parental supervision. They say that would allow the teenagers to contribute to family businesses, as well as help the businesses survive. The group Professional Logging Contractors of Maine supports the legislation, which it says will help ensure a future generation of timber harvesters in the state. The bill includes safety provisions, including prohibiting manual chain saw use by minors.

Hawaiian Airlines to add daily San Francisco flight

HONOLULU (AP)—Hawaiian Airlines plans to add an additional daily flight to San Francisco in the fall. The Garden Island reported Sunday that the airline will add a third daily service between Honolulu's Daniel K. Inouye International Airport and San Francisco International Airport beginning Oct. 16. The airline says the new service will add to its existing daily flights between San Francisco and both Honolulu and Maui's Kahului Airport. The carrier says it currently flies nearly 500,000 passengers annually to Hawaii from the Bay Area.

Virginia man sentenced in $1M Ponzi scheme

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (AP)—Federal prosecutors say a Virginia businessman has been sentenced to prison for a $1.3 million investment scheme that caused losses for 40 victims. The U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia announced Friday that Amrit Jaswant Singh Chahal was sentenced to 2 ½ years in prison. Court documents show he agreed last year to plead guilty to wire fraud and securities and commodities fraud. Authorities say Chahal falsely told clients his company earned returns of more than 28 percent annually. They say he falsified brokerage statements to conceal losses. They say he operated a Ponzi scheme by using money from newer investors to pay older investors and make it appear they had a return on investment. A lawyer for Chahal didn't immediately respond to an email Saturday seeking comment.

Paris cleans up riot debris as support fades for protesters

PARIS (AP)—Business owners, city employees and construction workers dug in Sunday to clean up one of the world's most glamorous avenues, after riots by ultra-violent yellow vest protesters trashed the Champs-Elysees in Paris to express anger at French President Emmanuel Macron's economic policies.

Luxury stores, restaurants and banks on the famed avenue assessed the damage after they were ransacked, looted or blackened by life-threatening fires set by some protesters Saturday. Tourists took pictures, shop owners repaired broken windows and city workers scrubbed away graffiti.

French political and security officials, meanwhile, met to come up with better plans to counter the violence.

Images of the destruction—including from a bank fire that engulfed a residential building in Paris and threatened the lives of a mother and child—have shocked France and seem to be further eroding public support for the fizzling four-month-old movement.

"I used to have support for them, but they have gone too far. A mother and baby nearly died... This isn't protest—this is criminal," said Alice Giraud, a 42-year-old musician from Marseille and mother of two, who was inspecting a burnt-out kiosk on the Champs-Elysees that still reeked of smoke.

Others walking down the famed avenue Sunday condemned the resurgent violence and put the blame squarely on the "thugs," a hardcore group of ultraviolent yellow vest demonstrators. Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said about 1,500 of those who traveled to protest Saturday in Paris came with the sole aim of smashing things up.

"The yellow vest protests are dying... They are basically getting smaller as time goes on, and the thugs are angry about that, so they are expressing it in violence," said Julien, 32-year-old baker from Paris, who wouldn't give his last name.

Protest organizers had hoped to make a splash Saturday, which marked the end of the "Great National Debate" that Macron had organized to respond to protesters' concerns about sinking living standards, stagnant wages and high unemployment. Yellow vest protesters think Macron's government has favored business interests and France's elite over the concerns of families struggling to pay their bills.

Some 10,000 people participated in Saturday's Paris protest, according to France's Interior Ministry, up from the 3,000 the Saturday before. In Paris, 192 people were arrested amid the violence. Around the country, the ministry estimated that 32,300 people protested, compared with 28,600 last week.

But it was far from the 250,000 yellow vest demonstrators who successfully demanded in December that Macron's government rescind a rise in fuel taxes—and a fraction of the 145,000 people who took part in peaceful climate marches Saturday around France, according to the ministry's figures.

Public support for the yellow vest movement that began on Nov. 17 and sought economic justice is fading as its message is being lost amid internal divisions and extremist violence at protests.

After offering French workers a series of economic concessions to address their complaints, Marcon, the protesters' target, is now resurgent in the polls.

Cutting short a weekend ski trip, Macron met Sunday with security officials at the Paris crisis center overseeing the police response to the riots.

The French president promised a crackdown on troublemakers who "want to destroy the republic, at the risk of killing people." But he also tweeted that the rioting showed that his government needs to do more to address protesters' concerns.

Nation

More evacuations in Midwest as floodwaters head downstream

ST. LOUIS (AP)—Residents in parts of southwestern Iowa were forced out of their homes Sunday as a torrent of Missouri River water flowed over and through levees, putting them in a situation similar to hundreds of people in neighboring Nebraska who have been displaced by the late-winter flood.

Heavy rainfall and snowmelt have led to dangerously high water in creeks and rivers across several Midwestern states, with the Missouri River hitting record-high levels in many areas. At least two deaths were blamed on flooding, and two other men have been missing for days.

While river depths were starting to level off in parts of Nebraska on Sunday, the water is so high in many places that serious flooding is expected to remain for several days. And downstream communities in Kansas and Missouri were bracing for likely flooding.

In Iowa, the Missouri River reached 30.2 feet (9.2 meters) Sunday in Fremont County in the state's far southwestern corner, 2 feet (0.6 meter) above the record set in 2011. People in the towns of Bartlett and Thurman were being evacuated as levees were breached and overtopped.

County Emergency Management Director Mike Crecelius said it wasn't just the amount of the water, it was the swiftness of the current that created a danger.

"This wasn't a gradual rise," Crecelius said. "It's flowing fast and it's open country—there's nothing there to slow it down."

Thurman has about 200 residents. About 50 people live in Bartlett.

Lucinda Parker of Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management said nearly 2,000 people have been evacuated at eight Iowa locations since flooding began late last week. Most were staying with friends or family. Seven shelters set up for flood victims held just a couple dozen people Saturday night.

In Nebraska, the Missouri River flooded Offutt Air Force Base, with about one-third of it under water on Sunday. Spokeswoman Tech. Sgt. Rachelle Blake told the Omaha World-Herald that 60 buildings, mostly on the south end of the base, have been damaged, including about 30 completely inundated with as much as 8 feet (2.4 meters) of water.

Hundreds of people remained out of their homes in Nebraska, where floodwaters reached record levels at 17 locations. The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency highlighted some remarkably high crests. The Missouri River was expected to reach 41 feet (12.5 meters) in Plattsmouth on Sunday—4 feet (1.22 meters) above the record set in 2011. The Elkhorn River got to 24.6 feet (7.5 meters) Saturday in Waterloo, breaking the 1962 record by 5 1/2 feet (1.68 meters).

In hard-hit Sarpy County, Nebraska, up to 500 homes have been damaged, including some cabins along a lake, said Greg London of the Sarpy County Sheriff's Office. The damage followed breaches of levees along the Platte River on Thursday and Saturday, and a Missouri River levee break on Thursday. The two rivers converge there.

London said many of the damaged homes are wet up to the roof line and likely ruined.

"This area's had flooding before but not of this magnitude," London said. "This is unprecedented."

Nearly 300 people have been rescued from high water across the state.

At least two people have died in the floodwaters. Aleido Rojas Galan, 52, of Norfolk, Nebraska, was swept away Friday night in southwestern Iowa, when the vehicle he was in went around a barricade. Two others in the vehicle survived—one by clinging to a tree. On Thursday, Columbus, Nebraska, farmer James Wilke, 50, died when a bridge collapsed as he used a tractor to try and reach stranded motorists.

Two men remain missing. A Norfolk man was seen on top of his flooded car late Thursday before being swept away. Water also swept away a man after a dam collapse.

The Elkhorn River consumes a section of western Douglas County Sunday, March 17, 2019, in Omaha, Neb. AP

Veterans court may be collateral damage in immigration fight

EUGENE, Ore. (AP)—Three decades ago, Lori Ann Bourgeois was guarding fighter jets at an air base. After her discharge, she fell into drug addiction. She wound up living on the streets and was arrested for possession of methamphetamine.

But on a recent day, the former Air Force Security Police member walked into a Veterans Treatment Court after completing a 90-day residential drug treatment program. Two dozen fellow vets sitting on the courtroom benches applauded. A judge handed Bourgeois a special coin marking the occasion, inscribed with the words "Change Attitude, Change Thinking, Change Behavior."

The program Bourgeois credits for pulling her out of the "black hole" of homelessness is among more than three dozen Oregon specialty courts caught in a standoff between the state and federal government over immigration enforcement.

The Trump administration in 2017 threatened to withhold law enforcement grants from 29 cities, counties or states it viewed as having "sanctuary" policies that limit cooperation with federal immigration agents. Today, all those jurisdictions have received or been cleared to get the money, except Oregon, which is battling for the funds in federal court.

The Veterans Treatment Court in Eugene and 40 other specialty courts, including mental health and civilian drug programs, risk losing all or part of their budgets, said Michael Schmidt, executive director of Oregon's Criminal Justice Commission, which administers the money.

The commission has managed to keep the courts funded through July, Schmidt said. Unless the Trump administration relents or is forced by court order to deliver the money, or the Oregon Legislature comes up with it, the commission must make "horrible, tough decisions" about where to make the cuts, Schmidt said.

Speaking in her small office in the Eugene courthouse, specialty courts coordinator Danielle Hanson said if the veterans court budget is cut, the vets would have to start paying for drug treatment, and they would be deprived of housing resources and travel funds to go to residential treatment facilities as far as 330 miles (530 kilometers) away. Some veterans might even be turned away.

"It would impact the program substantially," Hanson said.

Two dozen former servicemen and women are currently going through the rigorous program that lasts a minimum of a year, and usually up to a year and a half. They must attend group sessions three times a week, come to court at least once a week—presided over by Judge Valeri Love, who acts as their commanding officer—submit to regular urinalysis tests, and show progress. Graduates can have convictions cleared and avoid prison.

"The Veterans Treatment Court creates a routine and a regimen that many vets can thrive in. It pulls them out of isolation," said Michael Hajarizadeh, who represents the vets as a public defender. Many have post-traumatic stress, but the common thread is substance abuse, said Hajarizadeh, who himself is an Army veteran of the Afghanistan war.

Puzzling number of men tied to Ferguson protests have died

FERGUSON, Mo. (AP)—Two young men were found dead inside torched cars. Three others died of apparent suicides. Another collapsed on a bus, his death ruled an overdose.

Six deaths, all involving men with connections to protests in Ferguson, Missouri, drew attention on social media and speculation in the activist community that something sinister was at play.

Police say there is no evidence the deaths have anything to do with the protests stemming from a white police officer's fatal shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown, and that only two were homicides with no known link to the protests.

But some activists say their concerns about a possible connection arise out of a culture of fear that persists in Ferguson 4 ½ years after Brown's death, citing threats—mostly anonymous—that protest leaders continue to receive.

The Rev. Darryl Gray said he found a box inside his car. When the bomb squad arrived, no explosives were found but a 6-foot (1.8-meter) python was inside.

"Everybody is on pins and needles," Gray said of his fellow activists.

No arrests have been made in the two homicides. St. Louis County police spokesman Shawn McGuire said witnesses have simply refused to come forward, leaving detectives with no answers for why the men were targeted.

"We don't believe either one was connected to each other," McGuire said, but adding, "It's tough to come up with a motive without a suspect."

Ferguson erupted in protests in August 2014 after officer Darren Wilson fatally shot Brown during a street confrontation. Brown was unarmed, but Wilson said he fired in self-defense when the black teenager came at him menacingly.

A grand jury declined to charge Wilson in November 2014, prompting one of the most violent nights of demonstrations, and one of the first activist deaths.

Deandre Joshua's body was found inside a burned car blocks from the protest. The 20-year-old was shot in the head before the car was torched.

Darren Seals, shown on video comforting Brown's mother that same night, met an almost identical fate two years later. The 29-year-old's bullet-riddled body was found inside a burning car in September 2016.

Asia

Christchurch gun shop sold rifles online to accused shooter

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (AP)—A Christchurch gun shop on Monday acknowledged selling guns online to the 28-year-old white supremacist accused of killing 50 people in mosque shootings that have upturned New Zealand's reputation as among the world's most tolerant and safe nations.

At a news conference, Gun City owner David Tipple said the store sold four guns and ammunition to Brenton Harrison Tarrant through a "police-verified online mail order process."

The store "detected nothing extraordinary," about the purchaser, he said.

None of the guns sold to Tarrant were military style semi-automatic weapons. Calling for gun laws to be tightened, New Zealand's prime minister Jacinda Ardern has said the attacker used five guns, two of them semi-automatic, which were purchased with an ordinary gun license and modified.

It was not clear if any of the firearms Tarrant purchased from Gun City were used in Friday's shootings.

"My staff and I are dismayed and disgusted by what happened last Friday afternoon," Tipple said. "We cannot comprehend how such despicable actions could be carried out on those at prayer in a place of worship."

Tipple said he felt no responsibility for the tragedy and refused to say whether he believed gun ownership laws should change in New Zealand, insisting a debate over guns should be held at another time.

"This man wrote in his manifesto that the purpose of using a firearm was to divide us," Tipple said. "If we allow him to make changes in our ideology, in our behavior, he's won."

His store has been criticized for leaving out a roadside advertising billboard that shows a parent helping children with rifle target practice in the wake of the shootings.

Three days after the attack, New Zealand's deadliest shooting in modern history, relatives were anxiously waiting for word on when they can bury their loved ones. Islamic tradition calls for bodies to be cleansed and buried as soon as possible after death, usually within 24 hours.

Aya Al-Umari, whose older brother Hussien Al-Umari died at the Al Noor mosque, wept as she talked about a kind man, a quintessential big brother who delighted in teasing his little sister.

On Monday, the family was still waiting for the release of Hussein's body. They have tried to be patient, and understand that police have a job to do, but they are growing weary of the lack of information.

"It's very unsettling not knowing what's going on, if you just let me know—is he still in the mosque? Is he in a fridge? Where is he?" Aya said. "I understand the police need to do their job because it's a crime scene, but you need to communicate with the families."

Members of the Muslim community and police were Monday morning at a cemetery which has been fenced off and obscured with white netting. Backhoes had stopped digging and police officers said they were setting up a media area inside the cemetery.

Kawthar Abulaban, 54, who survived the shooting at the Al Noor Mosque, came to the burial site to see the preparations. She did not mind the row of photographers and reporters lined up outside the cemetery.

AP

Students hold candles during a moment of silence as they gather for a vigil to commemorate victims of Friday's shooting, outside the Al Noor mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, Monday, March 18, 2019.

Christchurch, New Zealand
Population: 388,400
Religious demographics:
- **No religion:** 45.5%
- **Christian:** 47.5%
- **Buddhist:** 1.3%
- **Hindu:** 1.0%
- **Muslim:** 0.8%

Graphic: Tribune News Service
Source: Christchurch City Council

Despite its peace, Christchurch painfully used to trauma

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (AP)—Ahmed Tani settled in Christchurch as a refugee in 1999. After his escape from civil war in Somalia, he saw the New Zealand city as a place of peace, a haven.

Christchurch was more than just physically distant from the bitter strife he had previously known. With its leafy streets, vibrant gardens and green public parks, the Garden City, as it is known, was even visually a world away from the desolation of Tani's war-scorched past.

A teacher in Somalia, he first became a taxi driver in Christchurch, a choice made by many refugees whose qualifications are often not accepted in their new homeland. He struggled at first to settle into a place so different from any he had known. But bit by bit he accepted Christchurch and it accepted him. It became home.

That feeling of peace was shaken for the first time at lunchtime Feb. 22, 2011, when a magnitude 6.3 earthquake crumbled many of the buildings in Christchurch's city center. People were trapped under the rubble and rescuers raced to save them in time. In the end, 185 people died.

For years after the quake, Christchurch was a city without a heart. Many of the buildings that formed its center had been destroyed or had to be demolished, and even its iconic central Anglican cathedral was partly collapsed. Schoolchildren who lived through the quake manifested higher levels of stress and anxiety than peers elsewhere in New Zealand.

Gradually though, Christchurch rebuilt, dragging itself up again both physically and spiritually. New buildings sprang from old and the community formed stronger bonds that allowed a human resurgence, a rebirth.

But the idyll of Christchurch was shattered again on Friday.

Tani was walking toward the Al Noor mosque for afternoon prayers. He was only a few hundred yards away when he heard the sound of gunfire for the first time since he left Somalia two decades before.

A racist gunman, steeped in hatred of Muslims and immigrants, opened fire on the house of prayer, the first of two shooting rampages that would leave 50 dead in New Zealand's worst terrorist attack.

"I was really frightened," Tani said. "We were living in Christchurch in peace and harmony. This is the first time we have had this. We have to realize this can happen anywhere."

For the second time in a decade, Christchurch faces the task of restoring a shaken sense of faith, of community, of security.

Christchurch Mayor Lianne Dalziel said everyone would again pull together.

"That's what got us through the earthquakes," she said. "We will come back from this and we will continue our path of welcoming people from all nations, all religions, from all cultures to our city."

Youngest mosque victim liked playing with iPad, soccer ball

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (AP)—He spent just three years on this earth, but in some ways, a friend said, he seemed like an old soul. Before he became the youngest known victim of Christchurch's mass shooting, 3-year-old Mucaad Ibrahim had possessed intelligence beyond his years, and an affinity for his elders.

But on Friday, when a gunman stormed into the mosque where Mucaad was sitting with his big brother and father, it was Mucaad's youth that left him so vulnerable. In the chaos that ensued as people fled from the bullets, the tiny boy became separated from his family. On Sunday, his brother Abdi Ibrahim said that police had confirmed the worst: Their beloved little boy was dead.

Each of the 50 lives lost in Friday's senseless barrage of violence at the hands of a white supremacist has left an aching wound across this close-knit city. But the death of Mucaad, with his big brown eyes and sweet smile, has pierced with particular ferocity.

"He's been loved by the community here," said Ahmed Osman, a close family friend. "It's been tough days. It's been really tough days."

Mucaad was a joyful, energetic child who always seemed to be laughing, Abdi said. And he was bright, with an affinity for technology. His toy of choice was an iPad.

The toddler impressed Osman with his intelligence. Mucaad seemed to particularly enjoy talking to older people, he said.

"He was very approachable," Osman said. "He is easygoing to talk to."

Nearly every Friday at 6 p.m., Mucaad would go to the park not far from the mosque where his life would ultimately end. There, he would watch Abdi play soccer with Osman and their friends. The toddler would stand on the sidelines cheering them, and kicking a ball of his own along the grass, Osman recalled with a smile.

Mucaad had planned to go to the park, as usual, on Friday evening. He would never get the chance.

That afternoon, he joined Abdi and their father at the Al Noor mosque for Friday prayers. Mucaad was sitting just in front of Abdi, listening to the imam, when a thunder of bullets shattered the peace.

Everyone began to run. Abdi thought his father had Mucaad. In the rush and the crush of people, the trio became separated.

That was the last time Abdi saw his baby brother. After an agonizing search by the family, police confirmed that Mucaad was dead, Abdi said.

On Sunday, Abdi waited at Christchurch's airport for the arrival of another one of his brothers, Abdifatah Ibrahim, who had been overseas when the massacre occurred. The shooting, Abdi said, still felt like a terrible dream.

"My mum, she's been struggling," Abdi said. "Every time she sees other people crying, emotional, she just collapses."

World

Hungarian leader tussles with EU as corruption concerns rise

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP)—As the Hungarian prime minister's conflicts with the European Union appear headed to a breaking point, calls are increasing for greater scrutiny of his government's spending of the bloc's funds.

An opposition lawmaker in Hungary has gathered more than 470,000 signatures to pressure Prime Minister Viktor Orban into joining the budding European Public Prosecutor's Office, a new agency that will begin anti-corruption investigations into the use of EU funds starting in 2020.

The EU allocated Hungary 25 billion euros ($28.3 billion) in the 2014-2020 budget period, but critics say those funds have often been spent on overpriced or unnecessary projects that pad the pockets of Orban's allies.

The petition comes just as Orban's ruling Fidesz party may be suspended or expelled from the main center-right group in the European Parliament due to its fierce anti-EU, anti-migrant stance.

Despite Orban's conflicts with Brussels—he thinks the EU bureaucracy has snatched power at the expense of its member nations—Hungary has been among the most successful EU countries in getting financial support from the bloc.

An EU proposal for the 2021-2027 budget period, however, could see Hungary's subsidies cut by 24 percent compared to the current seven-year cycle—a budget restructuring necessitated in part by Britain's impending departure from the bloc.

AP

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban attends a ceremony during the 171th anniversary of the outbreak of the 1848 revolution and war of independence against the Habsburg rule, in Budapest, Hungary, Friday, March 15, 2019.

Independent lawmaker Akos Hadhazy launched a petition in September meant to gather 1 million signatures and pressure Orban's government into joining the European Public Prosecutor's Office. He and other critics have long maintained that Hungary's chief prosecutor, Peter Polt, has failed to investigate many cases of suspected corruption, some even touching Orban's family.

So far Hungary has rejected joining the European office, citing national sovereignty concerns and even misgivings about its quality.

Still, in Transparency International's latest annual survey on public corruption, Hungary sits in 26th place out of the 28 EU countries, bettering only Greece and Bulgaria.

"There are two bastions that keep this populist regime in power—one is the chief prosecutor and the other is public media and government propaganda," Hadhazy said while helping activists gather signatures. "(Polt) has been successfully attempting to whitewash the corruption affairs involving the Hungarian government ... and the most prominent politicians."

"This political regime, which is infectious and dangerous for the European Union, is being supported by the European Union subsidies," Hadhazy said.

Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto defended Polt, calling criticism of the former Fidesz parliamentary candidate "a coordinated series of political attacks."

"In Hungary, the Chief Prosecutor's Office investigates and has investigated all cases which it considered justified," Szijjarto said.

The list of renovations and constructions in Budapest, the Hungarian capital, which were partly funded by the EU is long and imposing.

It includes 180 billion forints ($648 million) given for the city's fourth subway line; 11.8 billion forints ($42.4 million) for the Franz Liszt Academy of Music; 5.7 billion forints ($20.5 million) for the reopening of Buda Castle's Garden Bazaar; and 3.3 billion forints ($11.8 billion) for construction at City Park's ice-skating rink, Europe's largest. EU funds covered between 39 and 89 percent of those projects' total costs.

While Hungary may have to repay some funds to the EU for projects found not to comply with EU rules, observers say there's plenty left over for Hungary's favored elite.

Fresh rallies against al-Bashir as Sudan secures $300M loans

CAIRO (AP)—Hundreds of Sudanese took part in anti-government protests in the capital and other cities on Sunday as the government announced it had secured $300 million in loans to address the economic crisis that triggered the unrest.

The demonstrations began in December over price hikes and food shortages, and quickly escalated into calls for President Omar al-Bashir to step down, posing one of the biggest challenges yet to his nearly 30-year rule. Security forces have responded with a fierce crackdown that has killed dozens of people.

The rallies are being led by the Sudanese Professionals Association, an umbrella group of independent professional unions. Footage posted online showed dozens of people marching in Khartoum and its twin city of Omdurman, chanting: "Freedom, dignity and justice." The also canted "the people want the fall of the regime," echoing the popular slogan of the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings that briefly defied despotism in the region, but never made it to Sudan.

In some videos, security forces are seen using tear gas to disperse demonstrators.

Also Sunday, dozens of families demonstrated in front of the headquarters of the National Intelligence and Security Service in Khartoum, calling for the release of detained relatives, according to activists who spoke on condition of anonymity, fearing for their safety.

A leading Sudanese geneticist was among those arrested. Muntasir Ibrahim, who heads the University of Khartoum's Institute of Endemic Diseases, was arrested on Feb. 21 from a mosque in the capital, said his son, Gassim Ibrahim.

Gassim said his father and other university professors had drafted an initiative for a peaceful transition of power. Police had previously arrested his father on two occasions in January.

University lecturer Hadia Hasalaah also attended the demonstration in front of the security facility, calling for the release of her husband, Hisham el-Nour, also a university lecturer.

"He was detained for around three months without charges," she said. "This time, they (security forces) allowed us to protest, because of the American delegation" currently visiting the country.

There was no immediate comment from authorities on Sunday's protests and a government spokesman did not respond to requests for comment.

Sunday's demonstrations took place as a U.S. congress delegation is visiting Sudan to meet with government officials and opposition leaders, ahead of the start of a second phase of dialogue between the two countries.

Sudanese lawmaker Mutwakil Ahmed said in a statement the U.S. delegation, led by Rep. Gus M. Bilirakis, a Republican from Florida, met with Salah Gosh, the head of Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Services and other officials on Saturday.

A report by the state-run SUNA news service said Gosh told the delegation about "the positive results of the President Al-Bashir recent decisions to maintain the country's national security and cohesion."

The report also quoted him as saying that the recent protests "were legitimate, but their purposes changed and became illegal." It did not elaborate.

Al-Bashir disbanded the government last month and declared a state of emergency. He also has banned unauthorized public gatherings and granted sweeping powers to the police since imposing a state of emergency last month, and security forces have used tear gas, rubber bullets, live ammunition and batons against demonstrators.

US-backed forces admit to 'difficulties' beating IS in Syria

BAGHOUZ, Syria (AP)—U.S.-backed forces fighting to recapture the last Islamic State group outpost in Syria admitted on Sunday they were facing "difficulties" defeating the extremists, saying they were being slowed by mines, tunnels and concerns over harming women and children among the militants.

The battle to capture the extremist group's last patch of territory in eastern Syria—a collection of tents covering foxholes and underground tunnels in the village of Baghouz—has dragged on for weeks amid an unexpected exodus of civilians from the area.

The sheer number of people who have emerged from Baghouz, nearly 30,000 since early January according to Kurdish officials, has taken the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces by surprise. Most have been women and children whose existence in a labyrinth of underground caves and tunnels was unknown to the fighters.

In the last two weeks, many fighters appeared to be among those evacuating. But an unknown number of militants and civilians remain inside, refusing to surrender.

"We are facing several difficulties regarding the operations," SDF commander Kino Gabriel told reporters outside Baghouz on Sunday.

He cited the large number of mines and explosive devices planted by IS and the existence of tunnels and hideouts beneath the ground that are being used by the militants to attack SDF forces or defend themselves.

The camp is all that remains of a self-declared Islamic "caliphate" that once sprawled across large parts of Syria and neighboring Iraq. But a declaration of victory and the group's territorial defeat has been delayed as the military campaign sputtered on in fits and starts.

A final push by Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces started on Jan. 9 but has been paused on several occasions, mainly to allow for civilians to evacuate and fighters to surrender.

Underscoring the struggles faced by the SDF as they try to flush the out extremists, three IS fighters emerged from Baghouz on Friday acting as though they wanted to surrender only to blew themselves up, killing six people.

The campaign has also been hindered by bad weather. Intermittent storms have at times turned the battlefield to mud and IS militants have mounted counteroffensives on windy days, burning tires and oil to try to force the SDF back with smoke.

On Sunday, dozens of men and women were seen walking around the besieged IS encampment in Baghouz, as SDF fighters watched from a hilltop close by.

Focus

In this Thursday, March 7, 2019, photo visitors to the Pittsburgh veterans job fair meet with recruiters at Heinz Field in Pittsburgh. On Friday, March 8, the U.S. government issues the February jobs report, which will reveal the latest unemployment rate and number of jobs U.S. employers added. AP

A hot US job market is coaxing people in from the sidelines

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
AP ECONOMICS WRITER

A surprisingly strong burst of job growth over the past year has led many economists to wonder: Where are all the workers coming from?

As recently as last spring, analysts had worried that hiring would slow as the pool of unemployed shrank. Many employers have complained for years that they could no longer find enough people to fill their open jobs.

Turns out they were both wrong.

The pace of hiring in 2018 was the most robust in three years, and for a surprising reason: Many more people have decided to look for work than experts had expected. The influx of those job seekers, if sustained, could help extend an economic expansion that is already the second-longest on record.

The growth in America's workforce—made up of people either working or looking for work—has helped reverse an alarming consequence of the recession: The exit of millions of Americans from the job market.

For five years after the Great Recession ended in 2009, many Americans gave up on their job hunts. Some suffered from disabilities. Others enrolled in school or stayed home to raise children. Still others were stymied by criminal pasts or failed drug tests. Some just felt discouraged by their job prospects. Because they weren't actively seeking work, they weren't even counted as unemployed.

Economists had speculated that millions of these people lacked necessary qualifications or were otherwise deemed undesirable by employers and might not work again. They were thought to be, in economic parlance, "structurally" unemployed. Subsequent hiring wouldn't necessarily help them.

Yet for the past few years it has. The proportion of Americans ages 25 to 54 who have a job has reached nearly 80 percent—the same as before the recession. Economists refer to this age group as "prime-age" workers. It excludes older Americans who have retired and younger workers who may be in school.

"The U.S. is a very diverse and dynamic economy and can often surprise us," said Julia Coronado, chief economist at MacroPolicy Perspectives. "This is a positive surprise. We're due for one."

On Friday, the government will report on job growth during February, and analysts are forecasting a solid if unspectacular gain of 183,000. That would fall below last year's monthly average of 220,000 but would still be enough to lower the unemployment rate, now 4 percent, over time.

That it took nearly a decade for the proportion of prime-age Americans who have jobs to reach its pre-recession level shows just how ruinous the Great Recession was. It destroyed 8.7 million jobs. And the recovery that followed was comparatively sluggish.

Still, the unemployment fell steadily, from 10 percent to 4.1 percent at the start of 2018. With so few people unemployed, businesses have increasingly begun recruiting more widely, including among people who hadn't been looking for work.

"Economists were too quick to discount what the economy was capable of going forward," said Martha Gimbel, chief economist at the job listings site Indeed. "There continues to be more room to draw people into the labor force and get them a job."

Other factors that have held some people back from seeking work have included the high cost of child care and a lack of paid leave. Research suggests that such costs have held back the workforce participation rate of prime-age U.S. women, a rate that trails those in most other industrialized countries.

Child care costs delayed the return of Valarie Regas of Atlanta to the job market after she gave birth to her second child in 2012. Regas wanted to go back, but most of the jobs she found didn't pay enough to cover child care. So she remained mostly out of the job market for five more years.

After completing a coding boot camp, Regas was hired last year by a division of the European aerospace giant Airbus. The company initially wanted someone with more experience, she said. But after she pitched them on her enthusiasm and willingness to learn, she was hired as a software programmer.

"Even with the exorbitant cost of child care, I am now bringing home real money," said Regas, 36.

Many companies are relaxing their education or experience requirements, according to economists and staffing agencies. They are considering more applicants with disabilities. Businesses are expanding their training programs. Some, analysts say, are also looking with a more open mind at people with criminal backgrounds.

Partly as a result, the number of people who either have a job or are looking for one grew 1.6 percent in 2018, sharply higher than the average annual gain of 0.4 percent in the first five years after the recession.

The rebound has confounded many experts' projections. The Federal Reserve has consistently underestimated the likelihood of more people finding jobs. In 2013, its policymakers estimated that "full employment"—the lowest point to which unemployment was thought capable of reaching without sparking higher inflation—would arrive when the unemployment rate was between 5.2 percent and 5.8 percent.

Unemployment is now 4 percent, with little inflation in sight.

And in 2014, the Congressional Budget Office forecast that the proportion of people ages 16 and up either working or looking for work — often called the participation rate — would be just 62.5 percent by the end of 2017 and would decline thereafter. Instead, the figure reached 63.2 percent in January, a five-year high.

Though the participation rate remains below its 2000 peak of 67.3 percent, most of the decline has resulted from aging, economists say. The huge baby boomer generation is retiring en masse.

"We have learned this year that there's more slack in the labor market because people are coming back in," Fed Chairman Jerome Powell told Congress last week.

The influx of people, Powell acknowledged last year, had come as a "surprise."

"That tells us that there is more room to grow, and that certainly has implications for monetary policy," he added.

If more Americans are available to work, it means companies won't necessarily have to raise pay so fast to hire people, a trend that helps limit inflation. Milder inflation allows the Fed to keep short-term rates comparatively low.

Average pay is still growing more slowly than it did the last time unemployment was this low. Adam Ozimek, an economist at Moody's Analytics, says this suggests that there is still room for companies to raise pay and perhaps entice even more people into the job market.

Women, it turns out, have returned to the workforce in greater numbers than men have. The proportion of prime-age women in the labor force is now higher than before the recession. And for women ages 25 through 34, participation is at an 18-year peak. The participation rate for prime-age African-American women also exceeds its pre-recession level.

By contrast, prime-age men still lag behind their pre-recession level of participation. But the reasons aren't as discouraging as they were five years ago. In 2013, nearly half of prime-age men who were out of the workforce cited disability or illness, according to data compiled by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

But unemployment among the disabled fell last year to its lowest point in a decade. The government has also made it harder to obtain Social Security disability benefits. Now, less than 10 percent of men out of the workforce cite disability as the reason.

Instead, Ernie Tedeschi, an economist at Evercore ISI, notes that nearly a third say they aren't working because they've returned to school. And about a quarter cite family responsibilities, mostly the raising of children, up from just 10 percent in 2013.

As they assess a broader pool of job applicants, some companies are doing more to develop skills. Goodwill Industries has experienced soaring demand for its training programs, which seek to turn people with low skills or criminal backgrounds into job-ready applicants. Goodwill teaches such traditional skills as welding as well as so-called soft skills, which include getting along with workers and taking direction.

Jennifer Taylor, a vice president of Career Services at Goodwill of North Georgia, says companies are so hungry for workers that in some cases they hire people before they even finish their training. The Atlanta-based Goodwill placed 24,902 people in jobs last year, Taylor said, three times as many as it did five years ago.

"We are seeing vastly more employers that may not have used Goodwill in the past and that are significantly increasing their hiring on the spot," Taylor said. "They're struggling to find talent in the open marketplace."

A survey by Manpower found that 54 percent of employers invested in training programs in 2018, up from just 20 percent four years earlier. One-third said they're adjusting their education and experience requirements, with some no longer requiring a college degree.

Ricardo Madan of TEKsystems, a staffing firm, says his company is willing to train more of its new hires, rather than just finding already-qualified workers. Last year, the Charlotte-based company paid for a three-month boot camp for 25 potential employees run by Trilogy Education, a training company, and Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

It ended up hiring 19 of them.

"We weren't thinking this way five years ago," he said. "It's never been this hard to find people."

Overdrive

AUTO REVIEW: The 2019 Nissan Kicks adds another new choice in the small crossover market

By SCOTT STURGIS
The Philadelphia Inquirer

2019 Nissan Kicks SV: A long test in a new Kia Soul-fighter.

Price: $21,425 as tested, including $545 for two-tone paint. Standard items include blind-spot warning, rear cross-traffic alert, and Sirius XM.

Conventional wisdom: Motor Trend likes the "strong value, clever interior, kickin' stereo," but not "no AWD, seat comfort, noisy at speed."

Marketer's pitch: "Own your moment."

Reality: It takes more than a moment to grow on you, but it's still a little Soul-less.

What's new: The whole Kicks, front to back. The little crossover replaced the Juke for the 2018 model year (which is the model year I tested).

First impressions: I'm not a shoot-from-the-hip reviewer. I like to mull cars over for a couple days before I start making notes.

Good thing for the Kicks that I traveled close to 1,000 miles in this baby. Sometimes I'm just being cranky, but after a couple days, I soften up.

Up to speed: The Kicks features Nissan's 1.6-liter four-cylinder and makes just 122 horsepower. I thought for sure this would be a dog on the highways. But once I got used to it, the Kicks kicked pretty well. Still, it gets to 60 mph in lethargic 9.9 seconds, according to Motor Trend.

Shiftless: Though I missed having any shift control with the CVT, the Kicks didn't do badly overall. Only on one long, uphill entrance ramp to the Pennsylvania Turnpike did I feel seriously outmatched by other vehicles.

On the road: The curves are nothing to excite drivers about when piloting this little box, but the performance there matches such competitors as the Subaru Crosstrek, Toyota C-Hr and Soul. The Kicks' forebrother, the Juke, offered nicer handling.

The highway manners of the Kicks, though, are fairly pleasant. It's pretty harsh on rough roads but high speeds are no problem at all.

Driver's Seat: I drove a bare-bones model with inexpensive cloth seats and manual seat operation. I'm happy to report they were comfortable. They're a little on the soft side, but they keep occupants in place.

Friends and stuff: From the rear, 6-foot-2 Sturgis Kid 4.0 dubbed the seat comfortable and roomy, though he was relegated to sitting directly behind his 5-foot-5, well-scrunched mom. Behind me, there would be too many unpleasant Kicks in the rear.

Cargo space is 25.3 cubic feet behind the rear seats and 53.1 with the seats folded.

Play some tunes: Here is the point where the Kicks and I part ways. The bare-bones stereo just made my ears weep. (Motor Trend's SR must have had the $1,000 Premium Package, which adds Bose premium audio.)

The Kicks stereo offers bass, treble and mid-range adjustments, and even something called bass booster. Bass was just fine, but despite adjusting the controls from one end to the other, it always sounded like I was listening to my favorite songs through a telephone line.

The stereo system also caused my iPhone songs to skip. I'd just reloaded the phone with new music and was sure something had gone wrong in the CD recording, but the skips stopped as soon as I changed vehicles.

What's more, many carmakers never seem to test their vehicles outside on sunny days. It's truly annoying to check the 7-inch touchscreen and see nothing but glare.

Keeping warm and cool: One knob controls fan, another temperature, and tiny, fussy buttons control air source and other functions.

But the buttons match the tiny, fussy display screen that reports back on the fan speed and other information. Big distraction for the driver.

Confusing control: Small, fussy cruise operation buttons meant frequent decelerations, as Mr. Driver's Seat fat-fingered the wrong switch.

Night shift: None of the interior lights provided acceptable brightness for use while driving at night. The map light was far too bright, while the others were too dim.

The headlights aimed a little low, as well.

Fuel economy: I averaged about 29 mpg in a more highway-heavy range than the usual Mr. Driver's Seat testing grounds. Feed the Kicks anything you like.

Where it's built: Aguascalientes, Mexico.

How it's built: Consumer Reports predicts its reliability to be a 3 out of 5.

In the end: It's not that easy to find a roomy-ish $20,000 car nowadays. The Nissan Kicks isn't a bad deal, but it's quite slow. Upgrading the stereo means a whole bunch more money, though.

I'd probably shop around for the Mazda CX-3 or Hyundai Kona as well before committing to this.

TNS
The 2019 Kicks.

TNS
The interior of the 2019 Kicks.

MOTORMOUTH: Accelerator lab is not setting off car's warning indicators

Q: Every time I drive my Prius past the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility, the red triangle warning indicator lights up. This also happens to my wife in her Prius. Is this damaging the electronic components?

— F.H., Newport News, Va.

A: Damage to your cars' electronics is unlikely. The red triangle is an attention-getter that usually combines with another warning light. Because your question is way above my pay grade, I posed it to Todd Satogata, senior staff scientist at the Jefferson lab in Newport News, and here is what he said, for the record:

"Jefferson Lab is a national laboratory full of science geeks who love nothing better than a good technical mystery. Jefferson Lab also has more than 700 employees, many of whom are Prius owners who would rebel en masse if there were any conditions near the laboratory that are affecting their beloved Priuses.

"None of several lab owners I surveyed have observed the red triangle light (known ominously as the Master Warning Light) come on regularly near the lab, but one did offer a possible explanation. One intermittent reason that the Master Warning Light comes on is because of low oil pressure, which can happen with a Prius in very stop-and-go traffic, such as is often seen in the heavy congestion on Jefferson Avenue, or during hard braking when you are slowing down to appreciate the excitement of a national lab studying the forces and structures inside atomic nuclei.

"For the record, I have owned two Priuses while working at the lab — 2008 and 2013 models — and I have never seen the red triangle light come on except for an unfortunate encounter with a school bus on Jefferson Avenue that damaged the 2013 car beyond repair. In my experience, the acceleration of large vehicular traffic is far more dangerous to a Prius and its passengers than the lab's electron particle accelerators."

Q: We own a 2013 MDX Acura with 46,000 miles on it. We recently received a letter from Acura, Warranty Extension stating that the engine oil consumption exceeds client expectations. The original coverage is six years/70,000 miles. They've just extended it to eight years/125,000 miles, whichever one comes first.

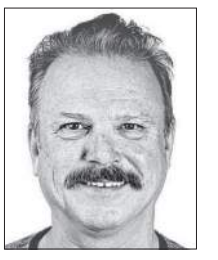
With our present rate of driving, we will not get to the original warranty, let alone the extended warranty. The vehicle is serviced at the recommenced intervals by the dealer. The dealer indicates at this time that the vehicle is not using excess oil. We plan on keeping the vehicle for several years.

Obviously, we're concerned about the repair cost if it does burn excess oil after the warranties are up.

— E.H., Maple Grove, Minn.

A: You are averaging roughly 10,000 per year, and by 2021 the engine will have about 70,000 miles. If your oil consumption has not significantly increased by then, your engine may not have a piston rings problem that led to the extended warranty. The issue is that the oil control rings may become clogged with carbon deposits. When that happens, the rings' ability to scrape and return oil from the cylinder wall to the crankcase results in excessive engine oil consumption.

Although your engine may dodge the bullet, I would still urge you to have a talk with the dealership principal, who may be able to go to bat for you should the problem arise beyond the new warranty. Carmakers like Honda are known to provide goodwill repairs.



By BOB WEBER
Chicago Tribune

Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. He maintains this status by seeking certification every five years. Weber's work appears in professional trade magazines and other consumer publications. His writing also appears in automotive trade publications, Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. *Send questions along with name and town to Motormouth, Rides, Chicago Tribune, 160 N. Stetson Ave., Fourth Floor, Chicago, IL 60601 or motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.*

Life & Style

Be Kind, Please Rewind: Oregon Blockbuster is last on Earth

By GILLIAN FLACCUS
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tia Thiel and her son, Micah Knox, 7, browse a selection of movies at the last Blockbuster on the planet in Bend, Ore., on Monday, March 11, 2019. Thiel is a regular at the store and says she goes to the store for the older movies she can't find on streaming services like Netflix. AP

BEND, Ore. (AP)—There are challenges that come with running the last Blockbuster Video on the planet.

The computer system must be rebooted using floppy disks that only the general manager—a solid member of Gen X—knows how to use. The dot-matrix printer broke, so employees write out membership cards by hand. And the store's business transactions are backed up on a reel-to-reel tape that can't be replaced because Radio Shack went out of business.

Yet none of that has kept this humble franchise in an Oregon strip mall from thriving as the advent of on-demand movie streaming laid waste all around it. When a Blockbuster in Australia shuts its doors for the last time on March 31, the Bend store will be the only one left on Earth.

"It's pure stubbornness, for one. We didn't want to give in," said general manager Sandi Harding, who has worked at the franchise for 15 years and receives a lot of the credit for keeping it alive well past its expiration date. "We did everything we could to cut costs and keep ourselves relevant."

The store was once one of five Blockbusters owned by the same couple, Ken and Debbie Tisher, in three central Oregon towns. But by last year, the Bend franchise was the last local Blockbuster standing.

A tight budget meant no money to update the surviving store. That's paying off now with a nostalgia factor that stops first-time visitors of a certain age in their tracks: the popcorn ceilings, low fluorescent lighting, wire metal video racks and the ubiquitous yellow-and-blue ticket stub logo that was a cultural touchstone for a generation.

"Most people, I think, when they think about renting videos—if they're the right age—they don't remember the movie that they went to pick, but they remember who they went with and that freedom of walking the aisles," said Zeke Kamm, a local resident who is making a documentary about the store called "The Last Blockbuster" with a friend.

"In a lot of towns, the Blockbuster was the only place that was open past nine o'clock, and a lot of them stayed open until midnight, so kids who weren't hoodlums would come here and look at movies and fall in love with movies."

The Bend store had eight years under its belt as a local video store before it converted to a Blockbuster in 2000, a time when this high desert city was still a sleepy community with a small-town feel to match.

Customers kept coming back, drawn by special touches like staff recommendations, a "wish list" for videos to add to the rental selection and even home delivery for a few special customers who couldn't drive in. Dozens of local teens have worked there over the years.

Then, in 2010, Blockbuster declared bankruptcy, and by 2014, all corporate-owned stores had shuttered. That left locally owned franchises to fend for themselves, and one by one, they closed.

When stores in Anchorage and Fairbanks, Alaska, shut down last summer—barely outlasting a Redmond, Oregon, store—Bend's Blockbuster was the only U.S. location left.

Tourists started stopping by to snap selfies, and business picked up. Harding ordered up blue-and-yellow sweat shirts, T-shirts, cups, magnets, bumper stickers, hats and stocking caps from local vendors emblazoned with the words "The Last Blockbuster in America," and they flew off the shelves.

Then, this month, she got a phone call: The world's only other Blockbuster, in Perth, Australia, would soon close its doors. A new T-shirt order went out—this time with the slogan "The Last Blockbuster on the Planet"—and the store is already getting a new wave of selfie-snapping visitors from as far away as Europe and Asia.

On a recent weekday, Michael Trovato of Melbourne, Australia, stopped by while visiting his twin sister in Bend.

After posing for a photo, Trovato said he misses a time when choosing a movie meant browsing hundreds of titles and asking a video clerk for insight instead of letting a movie-streaming service recommend one for him based on a computer algorithim.

"I miss quite a bit being able to walk into a Blockbuster or CD store and have that social experience and see people looking at stuff and talking to people," Trovato said. "It's something you don't get from the slick presentation of a music service or, you know, from the Internet."

The Bend store doesn't seem to be in danger of closing anytime soon.

Its newfound fame has been a shot in the arm, and customers stream in to buy $40 sweat shirts, $20 T-shirts and even $15 yellow-and-blue beanies hand-knit by Harding herself. The store pays Dish Network for the right to use the Blockbuster logo and has several years left on its lease.

People regularly send the store boxes of old VHS tapes and DVDs. They also donate Blockbuster memorabilia: a corporate jean jacket, key chains and old membership cards.

Employees always send a thank-you note, store manager Dan Montgomery said.

Recently, Harding has noticed another type of customer that's giving her hope: a new generation of kids dragged in by their nostalgic parents who later leave happy, holding stacks of rented movies and piles of candy.

Jerry Gilless and his wife, Elizabeth, brought their two kids, John, 3, and Ellen, 5, and watched with a smile as the siblings bounced from row to row, grabbing "Peter Pan" and "The Lion King" and surveying dinosaur cartoons.

"How could we not stop? It's the last one," said Gilless, of their detour to the store while on vacation from Memphis, Tennessee. "They need to see that not everything's on the iPad."

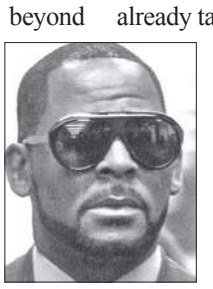
R. Kelly case poses challenge: Separating artist from anthem

DETROIT (AP)—When the recordings of the basic track arrived in Detroit from Chicago, Paul Riser Sr. knew it was time to get to work. But the orchestral arranger also knew he had something special to work with.

"It hit me the same way like everyone else in the world: The lyrics are so simple, the melody is so clear, the chord pattern is wonderful," said Riser, a Motown Records alum who wrote the orchestra parts and directed the strings and woodwind musicians for "I Believe I Can Fly." ''That song came from his heart: That's the other side of R. Kelly."

The dilemma of separating the sides of Kelly, who faces 10 counts of aggravated sexual abuse , now confronts Riser and millions of others who listen to or perform the singer's music. It's perhaps most acute when it comes to the Grammy-winning ballad that's made its way into movies such as "Space Jam," and been performed in countless reality shows, church services, as well as school concerts and graduation ceremonies. Children are even singing it bilingually.

Kelly released his first solo album, "12 Play," in 1993. It contained such popular sex-themed songs as "Your Body's Callin'" and "Bump N' Grind." But it was the anthem "I Believe I Can Fly" that made the singer from Chicago's South Side popular beyond R&B music.



Kelly

The 52-year-old Kelly has faced sex-related accusations before—he was acquitted of child pornography charges in 2008. But his current case comes in the midst of the #MeToo era, which gained momentum in 2017 amid sexual misconduct allegations against Hollywood studio boss Harvey Weinstein and other powerful men inside and outside of entertainment.

Before his arrest last month on the latest charges, Kelly's reputation and his music were already taking hits , particularly after the release of a BBC documentary about him last year and the multipart Lifetime documentary "Surviving R. Kelly," which aired in January. A social media campaign under the #MuteRKelly hashtag pushed fans to boycott his music and concerts. Music-streaming services stopped promoting his songs.

Some performers and listeners are finding it difficult, though, to dismiss the standout cut that vaulted him into the mainstream.

Released in 1996, the stirring pop standard "I Believe I Can Fly" spent six weeks at No. 1 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart and peaked at No. 2 on the all-genre Billboard Hot 100. It's been streamed on-demand more than 100 million times. In the wake of the Lifetime documentary, Billboard reported Jan. 18 that the song debuted at No. 16 on R&B Digital Song Sales with 2,000 copies sold—the tune's highest sales week in nearly three years.

Riser, the Motown alum who worked with Kelly for about a dozen years before meeting him in person at a Detroit show, said he's "troubled" by the allegations and believes Kelly's accusers. Yet he can't so easily cast off "a song we all wish we could write."

"We have to separate that—separate the man and his humanity and his faults and failures ... from his genius," said Riser, whose credits also include co-writing Jimmy Ruffin's Motown gem "What Becomes of the Brokenhearted" and arranging music and conducting the orchestra on Diana Ross' recording of "Reach Out and Touch (Somebody's Hand)."

Kelly is free on bail but faces canceled tours and once-eager venues unwilling to book him. He's also been dropped by his record label, Universal Music Publishing Group.

Where eagles flirt: A DC tale of love, loss and raccoons

This March 4, 2019, image from video provided by Earth Conservation Corps Eagle Cam, shows Bald Eagles Liberty and Justice on their nest in Washington.

AP

BY ASHRAF KHALIL
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP)—It's a tale with everything you'd need for a soap opera: star-crossed lovers, a stable relationship threatened by younger suitors, pregnancy and loss, and a hungry raccoon.

Washingtonians, along with a global community of eagle-watchers, have been transfixed this winter by Liberty and Justice, bald eagles who've nested and raised eaglets together for 14 years on the grounds of the city's police academy.

Their annual mating ritual, egg-laying and hatching process normally draws thousands of viewers to a special eagle cam. But this year has been unusually dramatic, with twists and turns that became headline news outside the eagle-watcher community.

"It's been a roller-coaster ride," said Tommy Lawrence, managing director of the Earth Conservation Corps, which runs the eagle cam and has been instrumental in repopulating the local bald eagle community. "People kind of take ownership of the eagles and really become invested in their well-being."

The saga of Justice and Liberty isn't the capital's only eagle drama. Last Wednesday, the Blue Line of Washington's Metro was delayed to rescue an injured bald eagle from the tracks . The bird later had to be euthanized.

Another eagle cam , at the National Arboretum, also has chronicled relationship tensions this year. Two eagles, known as Mr. President and The First Lady, experienced a comparatively mild relationship drama when another female showed up and tried to woo Mr. President. The interloper was chased off by The First Lady.

But the bigger drama involved Liberty, the female, and Justice.

Their mating season started normally. Together they prepared the nest they've shared for 14 years. They mated on Feb. 9. Normally at that point, Liberty would lay eggs—usually two—and spend most of her time sitting on them while they incubated and the male sought food for the family.

But this year, Justice disappeared almost immediately after mating, leaving Liberty with no way to gather food while keeping the eggs warm. During his absence a younger male eagle began appearing at the nest and courting Liberty. Researchers named him "Aaron Burrd" and speculated that he had fought Justice and driven him from the territory. A second young male rival also made some appearances.

After about 10 days, Liberty began making short flights away from the nest, meaning the temperature of the eggs dropped too low to hatch. On Feb. 23, Liberty flew away with one of her new suitors for two days, essentially abandoning her nonviable eggs. The next day, Justice reappeared after a more than two-week absence to reclaim his place. When Liberty returned, she didn't accept him back at first but gradually they reconciled.

Then came a final Darwinian twist. While the reunited pair was away from the nest, a raccoon climbed up and ate both eggs live on camera . Nothing was actually lost. The eggs were never going to hatch. But Lawrence said some newer eagle-cam devotees didn't fully understand what had happened.

"The reaction was intense," Lawrence said. "People would start freaking out on Facebook and asking why we didn't rescue the eggs and then some older members of the community would calm them down."

When interviewed Friday by The Associated Press, Lawrence announced breaking news: Justice and Liberty, after slowly rekindling their relationship, had mated the day before. Now the watch is on to see if Liberty is still fertile this late in the mating season and will lay more eggs. Justice, by the way, has continued his mysterious disappearances. On March 7, he vanished for five days before returning.

"We don't know where he keeps going," Lawrence said. "Our minds go to 'Does he have a second nest somewhere?' "

The twists and turns have been covered by multiple local media outlets with Kardashian-level of detail. Now speculation is running hot as to whether Justice and Liberty have a long-term future together or whether the younger suitors are a glimpse of the future.

"It does seem like there's all these young bucks out there looking for some action," Lawrence said.

If the aging Justice is going to face regular challenges from younger males going forward, Lawrence said he might discover that his mate is fiercely loyal—to the nest.

"The female will give up her mate before she gives up her nest," he said. "Liberty basically has the keys to the house and she decides who she lets in."

The cult-like following for the eagles is a testament to the wildly successful mid-1990s campaign to bring them back after they had died out locally in the late 1940s. Starting in 1994, the Earth Conservation Corps brought 16 new eagle hatchlings—four per year—from Wisconsin and raised them locally so they would develop an affinity for the area. Mature eagles leave the nest after four months to six months, and leave their home territory for several years, then frequently return to their home area to mate—"like going to college," Lawrence said.

Eagles generally live about 30 years, so that first batch of eaglets would be a middle-aged 25 now, but much of the now-healthy local bald eagle population is presumed to be the children and grandchildren of those first few hatchling batches.

Dan Rauch, a wildlife biologist who is responsible for Mr. President and The First Lady, praised the following that has developed around both local eagle cams.

"The community is great! Some people are very involved and are watching all day. They really have an emotional investment in these birds," he said.

Rauch attributes the popularity to the comeback story, the eagle's status as America's national symbol, and the natural fierce magnetism of the winged predators.

"The bald eagle itself is a very charismatic animal," he said.

Lawrence said he has learned not to underestimate the power and devotion of the eagle-watcher community. He recalls last year when a special cable malfunctioned and knocked out the eagle cam. Lawrence put out an appeal on Facebook asking if any IT professionals could donate their time and take a look.

"Literally a few hours later I get a call from the people who lobby for Verizon saying, 'We've received a bunch of phone calls, including from two congresswomen, asking us to fix this,' " he said.

'Captain Marvel' second weekend appears bigger than any other 2019 release thus far

By SONAIYA KELLEY
LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES—Despite four new wide releases, Disney's "Captain Marvel" maintained the top spot at the box office for the second weekend in a row.

The supercharged superhero film added $69.3 million in domestic receipts (a 55 percent drop) for a cumulative $266.2 million, according to estimates from measurement firm Comscore. That makes it the biggest second weekend of any 2019 release thus far.

Internationally, the movie earned $119.7 million over the weekend for a worldwide cumulative of $760 million.

In second place, Paramount's "Wonder Park" opened with $16 million. Though the computer-animated picture, which cost $100 million to make, came in above analysts' lackluster projections of $10 million to $14 million, it earned well below what is expected for a blockbuster animated feature. The film earned mixed reviews, with a B-plus CinemaScore rating and a 30 percent "rotten" rating on review aggregation site Rotten Tomatoes, a rare rotten score for an animated movie.

"Wonder Park" has no credited director after Paramount fired director Dylan Brown following complaints about "inappropriate and unwanted conduct." Brown disputed the claims.

At No. 3, Lionsgate's "Five Feet Apart" debuted with $13.1 million. The tear-jerker romance came in above analyst projections of $6 million to $9 million. The plot follows two teenage cystic fibrosis sufferers who meet and fall in love in a hospital but are forbidden to touch. The PG-13 film earned an A CinemaScore rating, but mixed reviews, with a 52 percent "rotten" rating on Rotten Tomatoes.

In fourth place, Universal's "How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World" added $9.3 million in its fourth weekend for a cumulative $135.6 million. It has grossed $466.5 million worldwide.

Rounding out the top five, Lionsgate's "Tyler Perry's A Madea Family Funeral" added $8 million in its third weekend for a cumulative $59 million.

Also new over the weekend, the studio's Spanish-language "No Manches Frida 2" debuted at No. 6 with $3.9 million in just 472 locations for a per-screen average of $8,250.

Focus Features' "Captive State" premiered at No. 7 with $3.2 million, within range of analyst projections of less than $5 million. In limited release, the studio opened "The Mustang" in four locations with $76,000, for a per-screen average of $19,000.

Fox Searchlight opened "The Aftermath" in five locations, with $58,000, a per-screen average of $11,600.

A24 expanded "Gloria Bell" from five locations to 39, earning $394,835, for a per-screen average of $10,124 and a cumulative $584,390.

This week, Universal opens Jordan Peele's latest thriller, "Us."

Austrian town claims tallest bonfire after 3 months' work

BERLIN (AP)—An Austrian town has burned what organizers says is the world's tallest bonfire, clocking in at 60.646 meters (198.97 feet).

The local bonfire group in Lustenau, near the Swiss border, took three months to build the structure. It burned down in less than half an hour Saturday evening. The previous record structure was a 47-meter (154.2-foot) bonfire in Alesund, Norway in 2016.

Western Austria has a tradition of bonfires called "Funken," or sparks. It's believed to go back to pagan times when people lit fires to banish winter and welcome the arrival of spring.

The big bonfire drew criticism from members of the Green party and the Austrian Association for the Protection of the Alps, which said it was "the wrong signal" at a time of concern about climate change.

Tyson will return to TV after sex misconduct probe

Tyson

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson will return to the air on two TV shows that had been put on hold for a sexual misconduct investigation.

The National Geographic Channel said in a statement Friday that Tyson's "StarTalk" will return to the air in April with the 13 episodes that remain in the season.

The statement says Tyson's other show, "Cosmos," will return on National Geographic TV and Fox at a date to be determined.

Late last November, National Geographic Networks and Fox said they would examine reports that Tyson behaved in a sexually inappropriate manner toward two women. Friday's statement did not address the complaints or investigation.

A message with a representative seeking from Tyson wasn't immediately returned.

Tyson said in December that he denied the allegations and welcomed the investigation.

Children's Museum removes Michael Jackson items

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—The Children's Museum of Indianapolis has removed three Michael Jackson items from exhibits after a new documentary renewed allegations of child sexual abuse against the late singer and Gary native.

The Indianapolis Star reports a fedora and glove Jackson wore onstage and a Jackson poster are no longer on display at the museum.

Chris Carron, the museum's director of collections, says it wants items on display to tell stories of "people of high character."

The HBO documentary "Leaving Neverland" featured accounts from two men who say Jackson groomed them for sex and molested them when they were young. Allegations of sexual abuse shadowed Jackson throughout much of his adult life. Jackson was acquitted on child molestation charges in 2005. He died in 2009.

Netflix will cut 'Bird Box' footage months after outcry

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—Netflix will remove footage of a real fiery train disaster from its hit post-apocalyptic survival film "Bird Box" months after the streaming giant was criticized for exploiting a tragedy.

The stock footage was taken from a 2013 crash in the Quebec town of Lac-Megantic when a train carrying crude oil came off the tracks and exploded into a massive ball of fire, killing 47 people.

Netflix licensed the footage from the stock image vendor Pond 5 and used it in "Bird Box" in an early TV news montage. The Sandra Bullock-led thriller is about monstrous entities that compel any human who sees them to quickly try to kill themselves.

Pond 5 in January said the footage "was taken out of context" and apologized. But Netflix said at the time it wasn't planning to cut the clip, although said it was looking at ways to do things differently moving forward.

Nexflix changed its mind and said Friday it will replace the footage with an outtake from a former TV series in the U.S. The company said it is "sorry for any pain caused to the Lac-Megantic community."

The mayor of Lac-Megantic, Julie Morin, had criticized the use of the footage, calling it "a lack of respect." She and Quebec's culture and communications minister, Nathalie Roy, applauded Netflix's latest move. "This result shows that by being united and pooling our efforts, everything is possible," Roy tweeted.

Hold the cake! Fans honor Ginsburg's birthday with exercise

By JESSICA GRESKO ASSOCIATED PRESS

AP

Alice Wisbiski, dressed as Supreme Court Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, is joined by others as a group do exercises on the steps of the Supreme Court in Washington, Friday, March 15, 2019, to celebrate Ginsburg's upcoming birthday 86th birthday.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Wearing workout gear and carrying water bottles, fans of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg celebrated her 86th birthday Friday by exercising in front of the high court.

The court's oldest justice has become known for her workouts, which include push-ups and planks. The justice has worked out on camera with "Late Show" host Stephen Colbert, and footage of her workout routine was also part of the 2018 documentary "RBG." A book about her workout by her longtime trainer came out in 2017.

On Friday evening, fans dropped to the ground on the sidewalk outside the court and sang "Happy Birthday" while doing the plank. Ginsburg's trainer, Bryant Johnson, led the exercise. He said Ginsburg had worked out Thursday night, and she told him to tell the crowd that for the first time since she underwent surgery for lung cancer in December, she has "been able to do the planks the correct way and the push-ups."

Ginsburg's son James joined the crowd. He said the justice's plans for the evening included dinner out with family. Earlier, the justice was treated to "lots of desserts," made from recipes by her late husband, Martin Ginsburg, he said.

Ginsburg's workouts have helped her regain her strength after two previous bouts with cancer—colorectal cancer in 1999 and pancreatic cancer in 2009. She was absent from the court in January as she recovered from her most recent surgery. Doctors have said there is no evidence of any remaining disease.

There were Ginsburg-linked celebrations elsewhere, too. In Brooklyn, where the justice was born, Democratic Borough President Eric Adams marked Ginsburg's birthday with a cake and a rally as part of his campaign to get the city to rename the Brooklyn Municipal Building for the justice. And in Missouri, a rehabilitated bald eagle named RBG was released back into the wild .

Ginsburg was at the high court Friday for a regular private conference of the justices and was likely serenaded by her colleagues. Chief Justice Warren Burger, who led the court in the 1970s and '80s, began a tradition of having wine, a toast and the singing of "Happy Birthday" on justices' birthdays.

Online relationship stalls over meeting in person

DEAR ABBY: I met a really great guy online eight months ago. He lives in another country and we have been in a long-distance relationship for the last six months. We talk all the time, video chat frequently and have grown very close. I have never clicked with anyone like I have with him, and I know he feels the same.

We are having a significant disagreement about meeting in person. I'm willing to travel to his country. The expense, while not negligible, is within my means. However, he says he has some serious ongoing health issues and he wants to wait until they are resolved to meet. He has had them for much of his life, although they have gotten worse during the time I have known him. So far, there has been no diagnosis or treatment plan.

When I have asked, he says I should be patient and he doesn't want our relationship to be about waiting to do things because of his condition. Meanwhile, I know how much pain he is in. I see it every time we chat, and I know how much it affects him. It's not going to scare me away. I just want to be there with him, to see if we work as well in person as we seem to online.

I don't want to add to his stress by insisting we meet, but I also don't want to spend months or years with my life on hold, waiting for a perfect time to meet. What should I do?

GAMER GIRL IN INDIANA

DEAR GAMER GIRL: When someone you meet online is reluctant to meet in person and interact with you fully, there is usually a reason. Having had these "health problems" all his life, one would think there would be a NAME for the illness and a treatment plan. Because he has neither, I question whether his health is the reason he doesn't want you to visit him. He may be in a relationship or not as he has represented himself in some other way. What you need to do is move on.

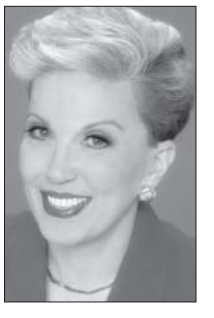
DEAR ABBY: My mother-in-law has the means to buy almost anything she wants. She's a shopper, a borderline hoarder, yet very generous to her children. She buys expensive and unwanted gifts for all her kids—satisfying her shopping urges by getting us doubles of her latest cooking gadget, vacuum cleaner or 10-pound box of chocolate we shouldn't be eating in the first place.

While we're not poor, we sure could use the money she's wasting on these silly gifts. How do we tell her that it's awkward for us to receive an expensive vacuum when we need help with school tuition for our kids? Is it wrong for us to look a gift horse in the mouth, or insensitive of her to flaunt her purchasing power while we're struggling?

REGRETFULLY UNGRATEFUL

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR REGRETFULLY: I'm not going to label your mother-in-law as insensitive or you as ungrateful. I do think the time has come for you and her son to have a frank talk with her and explain that, while you are grateful for the gifts, you could better use the money she's spending on them for help with her grandchildren's school tuition. If that offends her, so be it, but if she loves her grandchildren, I don't think it should.

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

I DON'T WANT TO CATCH THE BUS. I DON'T WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL. I DON'T WANT TO BE HERE AT ALL.
I'M SICK OF EVERYONE TELLING ME WHAT TO DO ALL THE TIME! I HATE MY LIFE! I HATE EVERYTHING! I WISH I WAS DEAD!
...WELL, NO, I DON'T. NOT REALLY.
I WISH EVERYONE ELSE WAS DEAD.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

HE THOUGHT HE WAS PRETTY CLEVER...
THOUGHT HE COULD OUTSMART ME, BUT I TRACKED HIM DOWN
BACK TO THE SOCK DRAWER, MISTER!
"HERE LIES JON ARBUCKLE: HE WAS SMARTER THAN A SOCK"

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

YOUR PHONE WASN'T IN THE DORITOS BAG?
NO.
AND I HAVE AN IMPORTANT CLIENT CALL IN A LITTLE BIT.
I NEED YOU TO REALLY THINK. WHERE DID YOU LEAVE IT?
HMMMM... DID I HAVE CHEETOS, TOO?
LET'S THINK OUTSIDE THE SNACK CABINET, SON.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Swiss peaks
5 — roll (winning)
8 Lily variety
12 Not worth debating
13 Chest muscle
14 Here (Sp.)
15 Shop tools
17 Void partner
18 Chemical suffix
19 MGM motto start
20 Enlighten
21 Elev.
22 Petrol
23 Prima donnas
26 Thornton Wilder drama
30 B — boy
31 Grass shack
32 "Closer" actor Clive
33 "Blue Bloods" actress Moynahan
35 El Greco's birthplace
36 Sunbather's goal
37 Carrier to Amsterdam
38 Cabbage choice
41 Chairman of China
42 Persian, for one
45 Recognized
46 Sightseeing stop
48 Falco of "The Sopranos"
49 Whatever number
50 Unruly kid
51 Volition
52 Zee preceder
53 Priestly vestments

DOWN
1 Both (Pref.)
2 Burden
3 Corn recipe
4 Norm (Abbr.)
5 Dizzying designs
6 Reporter's quest
7 Rm. coolers
8 Desert hazard
9 Iso-
10 Chasm
11 Unctuous
16 Droops
20 Listener
21 Small wiper
22 Belly
23 Apply cream
24 Medit. nation
25 Half of XIV
26 Ump's call
27 Have bills
28 Drench
29 SSW opposite
31 Chick's mom
34 Carefree
35 Lummox
37 Rap star West
38 Distort
39 "The King —"
40 Bridal accessory
41 Oodles
42 Poet Sandburg
43 Basra resident
44 B'way booth sign
46 Legislation
47 CEO's deg.

Solution time: 22 mins.

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Yesterday's answer 3-19

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■	■	■	36			■	37			■	■	■
38	39	40			■	41			■	42	43	44
45				■	46				47			
48				■	49			■	50			
51				■	52				53			

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: AJ Lee, 32; Bruce Willis, 64; Glenn Close, 72; Ursula Andress, 83.

Happy Birthday: You'll experience an emotional revelation that will help you decide what to do next. An opportunity to change the way you earn your living should be considered. Reunite with people from your past. Staying informed will give you a chance to get involved in an interesting project. A partnership will enhance your life as well as your status. Your numbers are 8, 15, 21, 28, 32, 37, 43.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Get your credentials in order, and add to your skills, knowledge and the way you present yourself to others. Self-improvement as well as connecting with people who are heading in a similar direction will encourage positive results. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Listen and learn. Delve into research and find out more about an interest, project or financial move you want to make. Put your energy into achieving your objective. Check out your options, and choose the path offering the least risk. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* A reserved attitude will help you avoid being taken advantage of. A partnership will disappoint you if you are gullible or your expectations are too high. Don't get angry; get out of the situation causing you grief. ✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Take care of small but important details. Enlist the help of people you know you can count on. Someone you least expect will shed light on a situation you face. Stick to your plan and your budget. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Don't worry so much about what others are doing. If someone makes a change you don't like, head in the opposite direction. You will avoid interference by giving others the freedom to do as they please. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Take a deep breath and do what will make you feel safe, secure and happy. Refuse to put up with anyone jeopardizing your rights or your chance to do as you please. Gravitate toward people who share your opinions and goals. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Pay closer attention to your living conditions, lifestyle and health. Distance yourself from bad habits and individuals who make you nervous or uncomfortable. Consider your needs, and initiate the changes that will ease stress and encourage greater freedom. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Take a break and do something you enjoy. Honing a creative ability will give you greater options regarding your income or how you live your life. A change will do you good and encourage you to surround yourself with like-minded people. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* You'll be attracted to unusual individuals. Be careful not to let someone persuade you into something that can be damaging to your reputation. Curiosity is OK, but falling for something that may not be true can lead to loss. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Don't sit on an idea you have. Take the initiative; you will be able to improve your life, your home and your future. Thoughts should be followed by actions, and plans should be put into place. Don't second-guess your capabilities. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Call in a favor if it will help you do something you are having difficulty with. Walk away from situations that are explosive before someone gets hurt. Avoid trouble, dealing with authority figures and institutions. Take care of yourself. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Make calls, discuss plans and find out how to use your skills to get ahead. Opportunities are apparent, so don't leave anything to chance. Check the online job market, and touch base with people who can help you get ahead. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, resourceful and aggressive. You are adaptable and demonstrative.

To submit astrological questions to the "Dear Eugenia" column, visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	4			3		
		6	5	8			
8			2				6
	8		9		2		5	
	4	6		3		8	1	
	7		8		4		9	
5				7				9
			5	8	9			
		8				1		

Difficulty Level ★★ 3/19

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

2	6	9	5	7	4	3	1	8
8	1	5	2	3	6	7	9	4
3	4	7	1	9	8	2	5	6
1	7	2	4	5	3	8	6	9
4	5	8	9	6	7	1	3	2
6	9	3	8	1	2	4	7	5
9	2	1	7	8	5	6	4	3
7	8	6	3	4	9	5	2	1
5	3	4	6	2	1	9	8	7

Difficulty Level ★ 3/18

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

HEADACHE CURES Solution: 9 letters

P	U	L	S	E	P	R	E	S	S	U	R	E	B	M
N	A	V	I	T	A	M	I	N	S	I	H	D	L	G
N	O	I	T	A	R	D	Y	H	E	T	E	I	U	Q
E	T	I	N	P	E	E	L	S	A	G	Y	E	E	Y
H	E	K	S	K	C	I	S	E	D	P	Y	T	S	G
P	A	C	T	N	N	A	R	S	A	N	R	X	H	R
O	S	A	R	L	E	B	F	R	E	N	O	Y	O	E
N	I	B	E	I	C	T	E	F	I	A	P	M	I	L
I	T	D	T	V	K	H	O	R	E	N	K	F	L	L
M	I	E	C	D	T	R	D	E	O	I	Y	A	R	A
A	R	E	H	A	P	E	G	S	A	O	N	C	E	N
T	H	F	M	U	C	A	I	H	G	D	E	E	V	W
E	T	O	B	X	S	S	M	A	S	S	A	G	E	A
C	R	I	E	O	N	I	R	I	P	S	A	P	F	L
A	A	B	D	E	S	I	C	R	E	X	E	S	T	K

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Yesterday's Answer: Reason

To purchase THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 39 through 54, order online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

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pro se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In Re The Matter Of The Petition To Appoint General Guardianship For: KJKT (9/7/2015) A Minor Child. By: Beverly Ngirmekur and Ferdinand Ngirmekur, Petitioners.	FCD GU CIVIL ACTION NO. 19-0084 **NOTICE OF HEARING**

Notice is herby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on April 15, 2019, at 9:00 a.m. on the 2nd floor of the Marianas Business Plaza, before Honorable Judge Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 18th day of March, 2019.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
/s/ By: Deputy Clerk of Court

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

SAIPAN MODE TOUR CORPORATION

Notice is hereby given that Saipan Mode Tour Corporation, whose last known principal office address was P.O. Box 506488, Saipan MP 96950 was dissolved effective March 12, 2019. All persons having a claim against Saipan Mode Tour Corporation are required to present the claim, including the name of claimant(s), address, telephone number, and description of claim alleged, to Saipan Mode Tour Corporation at P.O. Box 506488, Saipan MP 96950.

PUBLIC NOTICE

As of March 01, 2019, Ketson Jack Kabiriel is no longer employed by Safety 1st Systems CNMI. He no longer conducts business or is permitted to represent Safety 1st Systems CNMI in any matters associated with sales or financial matters for the company. Should there be any further clarification required, please contact Safety 1st Systems CNMI at 670-235-6500.

Owners for Safety 1st Systems CNMI, Inc.

WESTERN SALES TRADING COMPANY has an opening for:

One (1) Associates Sales Representative

Minimum Qualifications: High School diploma (may be foreign educational equivalent) and six (6) months of experience as a Salesman or Sales Representative.

Duties: Sells company's merchandise to retail stores and outlets. Meets with customers in order to explain and promote the quality and competitive costing of the company's products. Quotes prices and credit terms for purchase of company's products. Prepares sales slips or sales contracts and may collect payment from customers. Ensures that customers' orders are properly filled. Arranges for delivery of products to customers. Performs other related duties.

If interested, send resume to Western Sales Trading Company by email to jtorres@six7one.com or by fax at 670-322-9408. Proof of qualifications and police clearance required within three (3) days of hire.

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Dba: Kinpachi Japanese Restaurant
Kinpachi BBQ Garden Restaurant

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Cook (3): Must be experienced & skilled in preparing Japanese cuisine including but not limited to sushi, sashimi, & tempura. Can prepare all menu items according to quantity menus, must know cutting and preparation techniques for each type of fish used in sushi rolls as well as how to prepare rice, sauces and seasonal ingredients, must ensure that ingredients are fresh, colorful and always in stock, that the all-important knives are sharp and clean, and that all equipment is in working order. Must be able to maintain kitchen & observe safety & sanitary food handling practices as well as other related duties.

Additional Requirements: All applicants must be of good health and have a good moral character, must be able to follow grooming standards, must be able to obtain required food handler health certificate, must be able to provide current police clearance, with reliable transportation and must agree to drug test. Can work in flexible hours including holidays, weekends and night time schedules.

Applicants of all positions listed above are required to have a minimum of 2 - 4 year experience.

Application by phone call will not be accepted.
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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 01-2019

Opening date: March 04, 2019 Closing date: March 22, 2019

Positions:
(5) ARFF Trainee (Saipan)
(1) Equipment Operator-I (Saipan)
(1) Custodial-I (Saipan)
(3) Ports Police Officer-I (Saipan)
(1) Ports Police/ARFF Trainee (Rota)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the ***CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport***. Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10 year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the West Tinian International Airport or Benjamin T. Manglona Rota International Airport is no later than **5:00 pm on Friday, March 22, 2019**.

Detailed information on qualifications and position description for the above positions shall be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., except on holidays, at the CPA's Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cpa.gov.mp or hrspecialist@cpa.gov.mp by phone at (670) 237-6500.

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CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

WHATZIT Solution: Indiana Jones

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All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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McIlroy emerges from wild day to win at TPC

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. (AP)—Rory McIlroy made two late birdies amid the wild theatrics of Sunday at The Players Championship and closed with a 2-under 70 to win the next best thing to a major.

It required a major performance down the scary stretch at the TPC Sawgrass.

McIlroy could not afford to make a mistake over the final hour because of Jim Furyk, the 48-year-old former Ryder Cup captain who nearly pulled off a stunner. Furyk, one of the last players to get in the strongest field in golf, capped off a 67 with a shot so good into the 18th that he started walking when he hit it. It plopped down 3 feet from the hole for a birdie to take the lead.

But not for long.

McIlroy, one of eight players to have at least a share of the lead in the final round, was coming off a bogey on the 14th to fall behind and was in trouble with a tee shot that found a bunker right of the fairway. He responded with his best shot of the day to 15 feet for birdie.

Then, McIlroy hit the longest drive of the round on the par-5 16th, leaving him a 9-iron from a good lie in the rough to set up a two-shot birdie and the lead.

Most important, he found dry land on the par-3 17th, the island green that never looks smaller than on Sunday at The Players.

He was solid to the end on a chilly, cloudy day and finished at 16-under 272 to win The Players on his 10th try.

It might even set up the 29-year-old from Northern Ireland for the Masters next month, the only major he lacks for the career Grand Slam.

"This is probably the deepest field of the year, with so much on the line," McIlroy said. "I'm thankful it was my turn this week."

Furyk didn't know he was in The Players until one week ago, and he was on the verge of winning until McIlroy came through in the end. Furyk started the back nine with two birdies to get in the mix and finished strong. His only regret was a 3-foot par putt on the 15th.

Even so, it showed he has plenty of game left after devoting two years as Ryder Cup captain. The runner-up finish moves him high enough in the world ranking to qualifying for the Match Play in two weeks.

"A shot here, a shot there, maybe could have been a little different," Furyk said. "But ultimately, left it all out there. It was also nice to get in contention, to get under the heat, to have to hit shots under a lot of pressure, and then to respond well to that and hit some good golf shots. It'll be a confidence boost going forward.

AP

Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland chips to the ninth green during the final round of The Players Championship golf tournament Sunday, March 17, 2019, in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

Some of the most entertaining moments came from everyone else.

Eddie Pepperell of England, in his debut on the Players Stadium Course, ran off four birdies in a five-hole stretch to briefly share the lead, none bigger than a putt from just inside 50 feet on the 17th.

But it wasn't the best. One group later, Jhonattan Vegas holed a putt from the bottom left to the top right pin position, just under 70 feet, the longest putt made on the island green since the PGA Tour had lasers to measure them. That gave him a share of the lead, too.

"Magic," Vegas said. "If I tried it a thousand times I wouldn't even come close to making it, but I'm pretty happy that it happened today."

Both shot 66 and tied for third.

Jon Rahm and Tommy Fleetwood lost their way early, and then late.

Rahm, who had a one-shot lead, started with three bogeys in four holes and kept his cool until one curious decision. Tied for the lead, he was in a bunker, 220 yards away, partially blocked by trees on the par-5 11th when he decided to go for the green. It never had a chance, finding the water and leading to a bogey.

Rahm was still in the game until he failed to birdie the 16th, and then put his tee shot in the water on the 17th. He closed with a 76 and tied for 12th.

Fleetwood opened with a three-putt bogey and made all pars until hitting into the water on the 11th for bogey. He made eagle on the 16th to have a fleeting chance until coming up short of the island. He shot 73 and tied for fifth with Brandt Snedeker (69) and Dustin Johnson (69).

McIlroy emerged as the winner, his 15th on the PGA Tour and 23rd in his career worldwide. He earned $2.25 million and moved to the top of the FedEx Cup standings, but this was about seeing the results in a year that began well and has been getting better.

In six tournaments this year, McIlroy has not finished worse than sixth.

He has practiced patience the last three months, and he needed it after hitting into the water at No. 4 and making double bogey.

"I almost liked today because it was tough," McIlroy said. "I knew guys weren't going to get away from us. I knew there was some chances coming up. I stayed patient. Anytime I looked at a leaderboard, I was pleasantly surprised because I hadn't fallen two, three, four shots behind."

Nothing was sweeter than the sight of the leaderboard when he finished, especially with the Masters a month away.

Tiger says game 'right on track' for Masters

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. (AP)—Tiger Woods hit 12 of 14 fairways, made a 30-foot putt for birdie and holed out for par from a greenside bunker in the final round at The Players Championship.

Even though he finished in the middle of the pack, Woods liked the state of his game in preparation for the Masters.

"It's right on track," Woods said after shooting a 3-under 69 on Sunday. "I'm able to shape the golf ball both ways, which I'm going to need there. Just need a few more putts to go in, but that's about it."

Woods made four birdies in wet conditions and had decent looks at a few more, but failed to make many mid-length putts. Still, his 26 putts in the final round marked the first time he needed fewer than 30 this week on the Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass.

"I felt like I was playing well," he said. "My score didn't really indicate that going into the final day, but I was hitting the golf ball well. I'm frustrated at lipping more putts out than I think I have in a very long time. Just one of those weeks where just nothing really got rolling enough to get me going."

Woods' lone blunder—his only score worse than bogey all week—was a quadruple-bogey 7 at the famed par-3 17th in the second round. Woods put two balls in the water en route to matching his worst score on any par 3 in 24 years on the PGA Tour.

Had he not dropped four shots at the island green Friday, Woods could have been in the mix Sunday.

Regardless, he found more good than bad in his final stroke-play event before Augusta National (April 11-14). His last tuneup for the Masters will be the Match Play Championship in Austin, Texas, in two weeks, where he is guaranteed at least three rounds.

"I'm excited the way I drove it," he said. "I drove the ball well this week. I drove it not quite as long on the weekend with a little bit cooler temperatures, but I was driving it pretty straight and I was able to shape the golf ball both ways with all three of my woods, which was good to see."

Woods said he had no issues with his neck. He withdrew from the Arnold Palmer Invitational last week with what he described as a strain. It was the first time the 43-year-old Woods withdrew from a tournament in two years, shortly before his fourth back surgery to fuse his lower spine.

He used the week off to get his body right.

"I needed that," he said. "I needed to get that organized. If my back gets tight, it's going to go up the chain and so I got to start at ground zero and get my lower back moving properly and get everything, the firing sequence good, and then after that the rest of the chain will take care of itself.

"I think that it was the right decision to make considering that I have April right around the corner."

Woods was at his best on the front nine. His bunker shot at the par-3 third was perfect and trickled in to save par. His approach shot in a stiff wind at No. 4 left him with a 4-footer for birdie. His long-range putt at the seventh riled up the morning crowd.

His round would have been better had he not barely missed a 15-footer at No. 14. He also missed an opportunity by hitting into the water at the par-5 16th and then needing a 15-footer to save par.

"I was close," Woods said. "I know the score doesn't really indicate that, but this is one of the golf courses that—there's some weird spots here. It was fun to play but ... this is probably the most stressful golf course you ever play when there's wind out here.

"The wind swirls and you have fairways that are tough to hit and then you have the greens that are tough to hit and put it in the right sections. And if you don't, you're going to be standing on your head hitting some shots. So only had a few of those this week, so all in all it was a solid week."

Knicks' block on LeBron caps victory over Lakers

NEW YORK (AP)—LeBron James drove left, the No. 4 scorer in NBA history needing a basket to beat the worst team in the league.

Defending him was a journeyman who hadn't even gotten off the Knicks' bench in a month.

James' shot didn't go in. Didn't even get to the rim.

Mario Hezonja blocked James' shot with 2.3 seconds to play, allowing New York to complete a late rally and beat the Los Angeles Lakers 124-123 on Sunday.

"To beat a great player, sometimes you've got to do the unexpected and you've got to make big plays," Knicks coach David Fizdale said, "because you know that they're gearing up to make a big play."

The Lakers led by 11 with under 3 ½ minutes remaining before the Knicks charged back largely because of their defense against James. DeAndre Jordan also blocked one of his shots in the final minute, and James also missed a jumper with the Lakers clinging to a one-point lead.

James finished with 33 points, eight assists and six rebounds in his return after sitting out a game, but the Knicks spoiled it with a closing 13-1 burst. James shot just 4 for 15 in the final quarter.

"He just missed shots," Hezonja said. "If you are saying that you are the reason that he is missing shots, you are an idiot."

Actually, Hezonja was one of the reasons after getting the assignment in his return to the rotation after not playing since Feb. 13, sitting out 12 straight games.

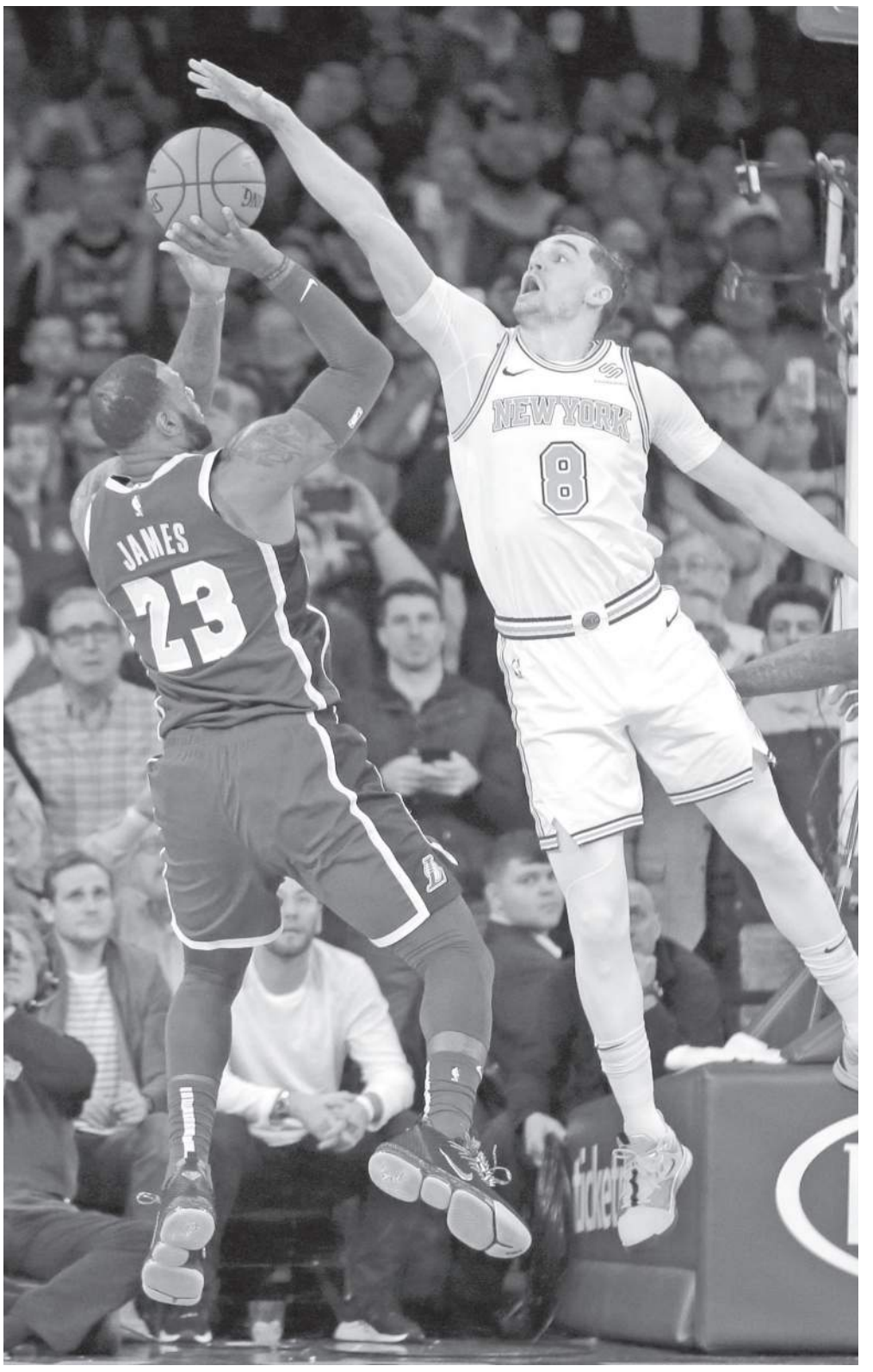
Emmanuel Mudiay had 28 points and eight assists for the Knicks, who snapped an eight-game losing streak. His two free throws with 22 seconds remaining were the final points of the game.

Kyle Kuzma added 18 points for the Lakers, who have lost three straight and eight of nine.

James sat out Friday in Detroit on the second night of back-to-back games and had plenty of energy for his lone visit of the season to Madison Square Garden. And it appeared his Lakers would ease to the victory when James' jumper with 3:44 to play gave them a 122-111 lead.

But everything changed from there and the Knicks ended up with just their NBA-low 14th victory of the season.

"We didn't close the game out. Being the competitor that I am, it bothers me that I didn't make enough plays down the stretch. It bothers me that I didn't even get a shot at the hoop. Of course that stuff bothers me," James said.



AP

New York Knicks' Mario Hezonja (8), right, blocks what could have been the winning shot by Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James, left, during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, March 17, 2019, in New York.

76ers 130, Bucks 125

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo scored a career-high 52 points, but Joel Embiid had 40 points and 15 rebounds to lead the Philadelphia 76ers over the Bucks.

Antetokounmpo made 15 of 26 shots from the field, including three of eight from three-point range, and sank 19 of 21 free throws to better his previous career best by eight points.

Embiid and the Sixers weathered a late charge by Milwaukee to beat the team with the best overall record in the NBA (52-18) and the top home record (27-6). It was the fifth time this season Embiid scored 40 or more points and came in his fourth game back after missing nine straight with left knee soreness.

Jimmy Butler added 27 points, JJ Redick 19 and Tobias Harris 12 for the Sixers, near the top of the Eastern Conference standings at 45-15.

Pistons 110, Raptors 107

In Detroit, Blake Griffin scored 25 points, Andre Drummond had 15 points and 17 rebounds and the Pistons completed a season sweep.

Reggie Jackson added 20 points to help the Pistons win for the 14th time in their last 18 games.

Kawhi Leonard had 33 points for Toronto, and Fred VanVleet added 17 points. The Raptors have lost four of seven games.

Heat 93, Hornets 75

In Miami, Goran Dragic scored 19 points off the bench, Dwyane Wade added 17 and came up with big plays late and the Heat found just enough offense to beat the Hornets in a game with major Eastern Conference playoff implications.

The win kept Miami (33-36) at the No. 8 spot in the East race—and moved the Heat two games up on No. 10 Charlotte (31-38), with 13 games left for both clubs.

The 168 combined points was the lowest in the NBA this season. Orlando and Chicago combined for 170 on Dec. 21.

Kings 129, Bulls 102

In Sacramento, Marvin Bagley III had 21 points and nine rebounds, Buddy Hield added 16 points and inched closer to the Kings' single-season record for three-pointers. Harrison Barnes scored 15 points, De'Aaron Fox had 17 and Harry Giles added 16 to help Sacramento complete a second straight season sweep of Chicago.

The Kings dominated in nearly every statistical category and outscored the Bulls 80-56 in the paint. Zach LaVine had 18 points for the struggling Bulls (19-52). Chicago has lost five straight.

Magic 101, Hawks 91

In Orlando, Nikola Vucevic had 27 points and 20 rebounds to lead the Magic to victory.

Aaron Gordon added 22 points and eight rebounds for Orlando, which remained a game behind Miami in the chase for the final Eastern Conference playoff spot.

Wes Iwundu helped Orlando overcome 38.8% shooting with a career-high 14 points and seven rebounds. Trae Young led the Hawks with 20 points.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Toronto	49	21	.710	—
Philadelphia	45	25	.643	4
Boston		43	27	.614 6
Brooklyn	36	36	.500	14
New York	14	56	.200	35

Central Division

x-Milwaukee	52	18	.743	—
Indiana	44	26	.629	8
Detroit	36	33	.522	15.5
Chicago	19	52	.268	33.5
Cleveland	17	53	.243	35

Southeast Division

Miami	33	36	.478	—
Orlando	33	38	.465	1
Charlotte	31	38	.449	2
Washington	30	40	.429	3.5
Atlanta	24	47	.338	10

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Pacific Division

Golden State	47	21	.691	—
LA Clippers	41	30	.577	7.5
Sacramento	34	35	.493	13.5
LA Lakers	31	39	.443	17
Phoenix	17	54	.239	31.5

Southwest Division

Houston	44	26	.629	—
San Antonio	41	29	.586	3
New Orleans	30	42	.417	15
Dallas	28	41	.406	15.5
Memphis	28	42	.400	16

Northwest Division

Denver	46	22	.676	—
Portland	42	27	.609	4.5
Oklahoma City	42	28	.600	5
Utah	40	29	.580	6.5
Minnesota	32	38	.457	15

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Thiem upsets Federer; Canadian teen stuns Kerber in finals

INDIAN WELLS, Calif. (AP)— Roger Federer came out playing like his legendary self. Dominic Thiem needed a set to adjust to what he was seeing across the net.

Thiem went on to beat Federer 3-6, 6-3, 7-5 and win the BNP Paribas Open on Sunday, denying Federer a record sixth title in the desert.

"It just feels unreal what happened," Thiem said. "He's such a legend."

Thiem trailed 4-3 and 5-4 in the third set before breaking Federer with a forehand winner to go up 6-5. Thiem served out the two-hour match that ended with yet another error from Federer, a forehand dumped into the net.

Federer was in the final for the third straight year and lost for the second year in a row. He was beaten in a third-set tiebreaker by Juan Martin del Potro last year. Federer won his 100th career title in Dubai recently.

Thiem had lost in his previous two ATP Masters 1000 finals. But the 25-year-old Austrian's solid serve held up against Federer as it had throughout the tournament.

Thiem was broken just four times out of 61 service games in the tournament. He didn't lose serve during his semifinal win over Milos Raonic, facing only one break point in that match.

Canadian teenager Bianca Andreescu upset Angelique Kerber 6-4, 3-6, 6-4, to win the women's title.

Thiem and Andreescu earned $1.3 million each.

Federer and Thiem had split their four previous meetings, but Federer had won both of their hard-court matches without dropping a set.

He cruised through the first set in 36 minutes while getting broken for just the second time during his run to his ninth appearance in the final. But Federer broke back in the next game and served out the set.

"The way he was playing the first set was unreal," Thiem said. "I had to get used to it."

Thiem earned the only break of the second set in the fourth game, going up 3-1. Federer won just two more games in the set.

Both players were on serve in the third set until Thiem collected the only break. Federer tried consecutive drop shots that Thiem retrieved for crosscourt forehand winners before the Austrian hit a winning forehand to lead 6-5.

"He did very well when he got up to the ball, stayed calm, made the shot," Federer said.

Federer won just one point on Thiem's serve in the final game.

"Just came up against somebody who was on the day a bit better when it really mattered," Federer said. "I have been in these positions so many times that I get over it very quickly

Lady Knights survive 2OT thriller

By ROBY N. PAMINTUAN
pamintuanroby@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Mount Carmel School outlasted Grace Christian Academy in double overtime, 28-26, during the girls division game in the 2018-2019 Commonwealth Coalition of Private Schools Association Varsity Basketball League yesterday at the Lady Eagles court in Navy Hill.

Louisa Han delivered the key baskets for the Lady Knights in the second overtime, as she zipped past her defenders for two fastbreak buckets, while Tina Choi made the lone field goal for GCA. After Choi's shot off a miss from her teammate, the Lady Eagles failed to hit a basket, as they struggled against MCS' swarming defense in the closing seconds of the game.

Earlier in regulation, with GCA down, 19-22, Jasmine Phan nailed a 3-pointer under duress to send the game into overtime. Phan swished in two treys in the fourth period to keep the Lady Eagles in the game.

Then in the first overtime period, Phan made two clutch free throws with less than a minute to go, putting GCA on top. However, Quincy Chinen countered with a fastbreak layup to force another standoff.

The Lady Knights went on to have the last say in the second overtime with Han's pair of baskets. The MCS captain scored a team-high 12 points, 8 came in the fourth quarter and overtime periods. Chinen had two treys and finished the game with 8 points, while Kalyn Diaz added 4 markers.

Phan and Choi submitted 12 markers apiece, while Anna Nunez recorded the 2 other points of GCA.

With the tough win, the Lady Knights maintained their undefeated record (3-0), while The Lady Eagles fell to an even 2-2.

Meanwhile, MCS also won over GCA in the boys division game, 64-28.

Minsu Park led the Knights with his 12 markers, while Angelo Factor had all his 10 points in the third canto. Seung Jun Baek logged a team-high 10 points for GCA, while Steven Balakrishna and Spencer Palacios contributed 7 apiece.

The Knights now hold a 8-3 card, while GCA dropped to a 3-9 slate.

Over at the Koblerville Gymnasium, Saipan Southern High School thumped Mount Carmel School 2, 59-38, to boast a 9-2 card, while MCS 2 spiraled to a 3-9 mark.

In other results, No. 1 Kagman High School defeated Agape, 65-57, at the latter's home court in Gualo Rai.

KHS improved to a 12-1 record, while Torchbearers are still searching for their first win after 12 matches.

Regular season games will continue today with Saipan Southern hosting Saipan International School at the Koblerville Gymnasium and Agape having a double-header in Gualo Rai. Agape's girls team will take on MCS at 3:30pm, while Agape 1 and MCS 1 will lock horns in the boys game at 4:30pm.

MCS 28—Han 12, Chinen 8, Diaz 4, Cho 2, F. Bucalig 2.
GCA 26—Choi 12, Phan 12, Nunez 2
Scoring by quarters: 7-4, 11-10, 16-12, 22-22, 24-24 (1OT), 28-26 (2OT)

ROBY N. PAMINTUAN
Mt. Carmel School's Louisa Han unloads a shot against Grace Christian Academy's Jasmine Phan during their game in the CCOPSA caging yesterday at the GCA court in Navy Hill.

SBL to hold shortened season

The Saipan Baseball League will organize a shortened baseball season this year to form an all-star team that will represent the CNMI in the 3rd Micronesian Baseball Classic scheduled in Palau from June 21 to 29.

Because of the limited time allotted to finalize team rosters, SBL is limiting the number of entries to six to ensure the finals are completed on time. Also with the proposed six squads, the league will hold games only on Saturdays and Sundays with two matches taking place each day.

Then to speed up the games, each match will only be played for seven innings, instead of nine. Potential all-stars will be scouted during the season and the league is encouraging these players to play and compete to the best of their ability.

A managers/coaches meeting will be held on March 21 at 5:30pm at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium's conference room. For more information, contact league director Tony Rogolifoi, at 285-3966. ***(PR)***

All Schools qualifiers start today

The series of qualifying events for the 2019 Public School System/McDonald's All Schools Track and Field Championships will begin today at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.

The qualifier today will run from 4pm to 6:30pm and will be for Koblerville Elementary School, William S. Reyes, Saipan Community School, San Vicente, Saipan International School, Seventh Day Adventist, and Northern Marianas International School students. Events lined up are 60m, 100, and 200m runs and long jump.

One more round of qualifiers will take place this week with Garapan, Mt. Carmel School, Gregorio T. Camacho, Agape Christian School, Kagman, Brilliant Star School, and Green Meadow School students in the U7, U9, and U11 age groups joining the same events tomorrow.

With the organizing Northern Marianas Athletics holding the series of qualifiers this month and in April, it is reminding the public that the track facility will be closed from Monday to Saturday from 3pm to 6:30pm. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

SUN

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the match, courtesy of Guine Borja's conversion in the 48th.

Meanwhile, TanHoldings FC kept its unbeaten record after downing Kanoa FC, 5-2.

Mark Esalan towed TanHoldings to its third win in as many games after scoring four goals, while Kaden Church registered the other goal for the division-leading squad.

Church's shot in the 24th minute gave TanHoldings the lead, while Esalan upped their advantage to two six minutes later. It took a while before Kanoa managed to light up the board, as Andruw Omelau knocked one in with just four minutes left in the first half.

After clinging to a shaky lead at the break, TanHoldings pulled away behind Esalan whose second goal came in the 65th minute, while his last two were made in the 85th (off a penalty kick) and 88th. Terrance Evan Belcher posted the lone goal for Kanoa in the second half, as their team absorbed their second defeat in three matches.

NMI U18 4, Old B Bank 0

Also maintaining an unblemished record in Division A was the NMI Boys U18 National Team after it eased past Old B Bank.

Sunjoon Tenorio powered the NMI U18 to the blowout win with his three goals. His goal in the 42nd minute broke the NMI U18's long silence and put the squad in the driver's seat.

Then after a slow first half, the NMI U18 got into the groove in the second with Razeff Altamirano scoring in the 55th minute and Tenorio nailing back-to-back goals (70th and 76th) to complete his hat trick.

PIC 5, Shirley's 4

Pacific Islands Club banked on a strong start to hand Shirley's its first loss.

PIC zoomed to a 3-1 lead at the break after drawing goals from Floyd Muna, Albert Bergancia, and Bailey Spaeth in the fifth, 19th, and 33rd minute, respectively. Shirley's got its only goal in the first half from Hojin Woo (25th minute). Woo went on to make two more in the second half (46th and 63rd) as he teamed up with Jerry Tan (who scored in the 63rd minute) in trying to bring Shirley's back into the game. However, one goal apiece from Brandon Tenorio (47th minute) and Logan Mister (66th) gave PIC enough cushion to preserve the win.

Spring Men's M-League Standings
(As of March 17, 2019)

DIVISION A

Teams	MP	W	D	L	PTS	GF	GA	GD
TanHoldings	3	3	0	0	9	16	3	13
NMI U18	2	2	0	0	6	9	0	9
Paire	2	2	0	0	6	7	1	6
Kanoa	3	1	0	2	3	6	10	-4
KFAS	1	0	0	1	0	0	5	-5
Old B Bank	3	0	0	3	0	1	10	-9
Matansa	2	0	0	2	0	1	11	-10

DIVISION B

Shirley's	3	2	0	1	6	12	9	3
PIC	3	2	0	1	6	12	10	2
Sun Palace	3	2	0	1	6	11	11	0
WNT	3	0	0	3	0	4	9	-5

MISTER

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at 1:51:06 to prevail against four other participants in her field. Heather Taylor came in at second after submitting 1:52:32 and was followed by Ayana Braxton (1:56:16(, Shawna Brennfleck (2:04:52), and Kathy Ruszala (2:18:14).

Meanwhile, Asian Pacific Hotel, Inc. clinched first place in the team division after posting the fastest time (1:45:22) in the entire event. Jinie Thompson, Willy Barbo, and Alyona Gersonde were the swimmer, bike, and runner for APHI. Jinie was the second finisher in the swim leg, which was held in the waters off Kilili Beach with participants heading to as far as the partially submerged World War II tanks. In the bike leg, riders proceeded to the south side first (near the old Japanese bunker at the Airport Road) before going to the Hyatt Regency Saipan via Beach Road and back to Kilili. For the run, it was also via Beach Road with the turnaround point across Monika's Gallery.

Jinie's sister, Jinju,was first out of the water and teamed up with biker Phil Guiang and runner Rommel Buenaflor for TRAC, which finished second after registering 1:51:31. Runner Bridget Mahoney and biker/runner J.P. Nogues of Mahonogues rounded out the Top 3 after timing in at 1:58:45.

Brabu Pharmacy (2:00:12), Team Hyatt (2:01:27), Just TRI (2:01:46), ISLA (2:01:49), Team Ang Pogi (2:07:10), Power Puff Girls (2:07:15), Bumble Vee (2:12:00), Get Fit 670 (2:33:23), and Fitspiration (2:33:23) were the other team finishers.

MOVE

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brief the Pacific Games Council about the status of Saipan's hosting of the Mini Games.

NMSA made no comment about the withdrawal and instead referred the decision to the Pacific Games Council, which in return has reached out to the governor.

"We have written to the governor, requesting a meeting early next week in order to look at ways to keep the Games in the CNMI, including by scaling them down, if necessary," Minogue said.

Torres is currently off-island and will be back on Wednesday, according to press secretary Kevin Bautista,

Meanwhile, pending their meeting with the governor, Minogue did not elaborate further on the issue of scaling down the 2021 Mini Games, which in the CNMI's initial bid in 2014 will offer 12 sports—athletics, badminton, golf, tennis, va'a (canoe racing), volleyball (indoor and beach), baseball, sailing, swimming, triathlon, weightlifting, and wrestling.

Local sports federations that will handle competitions in the calendar of events for the 2021 Mini Games declined to comment on the government's withdrawal of support, as they wanted to wait for the outcome of the possible dialogue between the Pacific Games Council and Torres, along with the other stakeholders in the Games.

Torres made the tough call after damage assessments from the Category 5 storm revealed that recovery period will continue for three years, the least, and maybe even longer with the CNMI facing manpower and funding challenges in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Yutu. The Mini Games, in the Commonwealth's bid document, is scheduled in the summer of 2021 or a little over two years from now.

PSS Interscholastic 3x3 Basketball Tournament

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Marianas High School's Bailey Spaeth drives against Saipan Southern High School defenders during their game in the Public School System Interscholastic 3x3 Basketball Tournament held early this month at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

A Saipan Southern High School player tries to get creative with his shot against two Kagman High School defenders.

Tinian High School's Tyler Santos, front, beats a Kagman High School player for the rebound.

A Marianas High School player pulls up for a point-blank shot.

A Kagman High School player, center, challenges the defense of two Marianas High School players.

Saipan Southern High School's Irvin Villarin, right, drives baseline against a Tinian High School player.

A Saipan Southern High School player, right, steps back to get ready for a long shot against a Marianas High School defender.

McIlroy emerges from wild day to win at TPC

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Sports

Knicks' block on LeBron caps victory over Lakers

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Move to save Mini Games

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Pacific Games Council is seeking an audience with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres upon learning that the CNMI government has withdrawn its commitment to support Saipan's hosting of the 2021 Pacific Mini Games.

"Yes, we have been notified by NMSA," PGC chief executive officer Andrew Minogue said when asked if the unfortunate development has reached them.

Last March 13, Torres wrote to Northern Marianas Sports Association president Michael White, informing the latter that the government will not be able to back up NMSA for the hosting of the quadrennial meet, as the CNMI's resources will be focused on recovery and rebuilding after the Commonwealth was hammered by Super Typhoon Yutu in October last year.

Torres' decision came a few days before White flew to Fiji to attend the Oceania National Olympic Committee meeting and also

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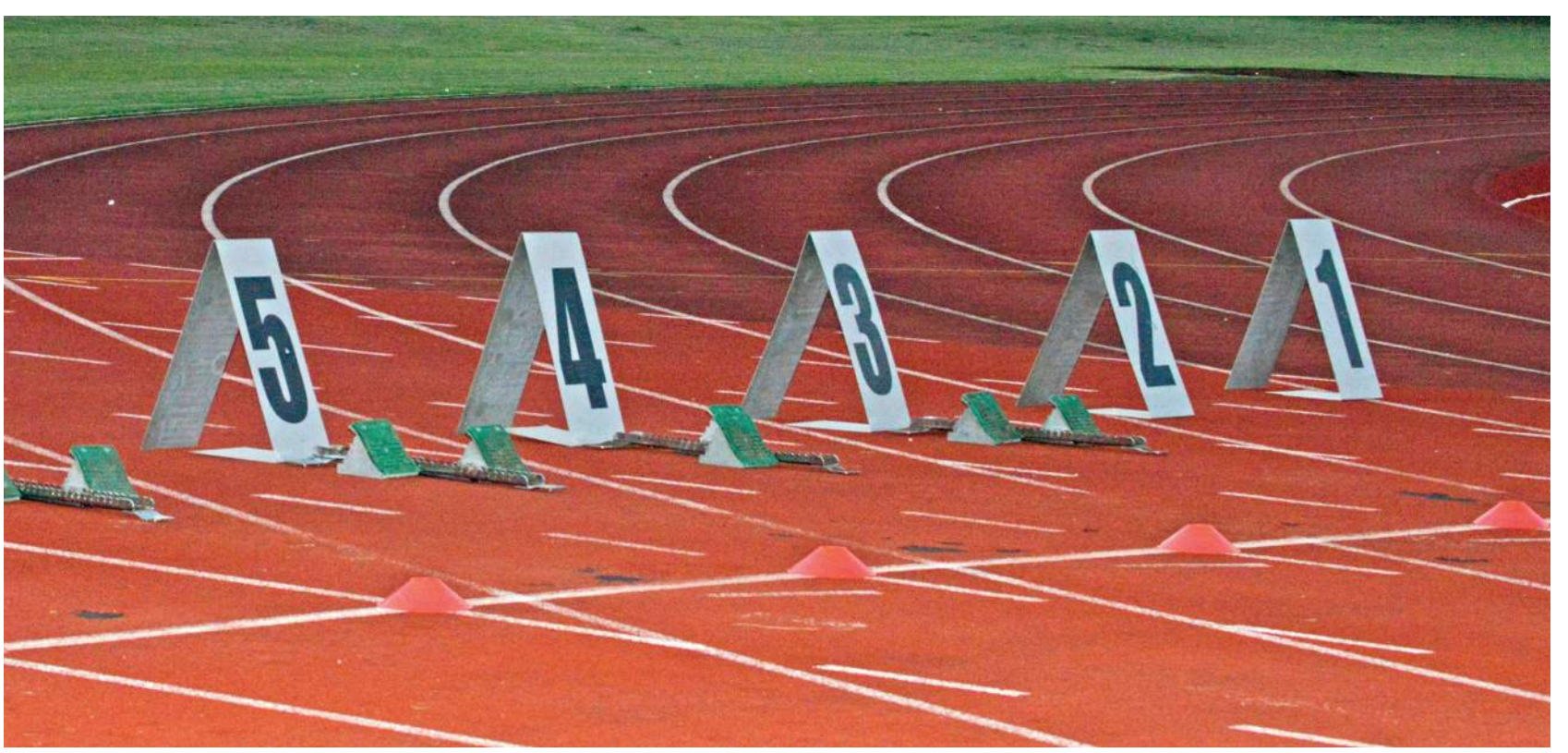

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Whether these lanes at the Oleai Sports Complex track oval will be filled or not two years from now remains to be seen, as the Pacific Games Council is seeking a meeting with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres to discuss the fate of the 2021 Pacific Mini Games.

Sun Palace wins; TanHoldings stays on top

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Sun Palace notched back-to-back victories, while TanHoldings Football Club rolled to its third straight triumph after outclassing their respective opponents in the 2019 Spring Men's M-League last Sunday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Sun Palace and CNMI Women's National Team players kick the ball during the second half of their Division B game in the 2019 Spring Men's M-League last Sunday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Sun Palace edged out the CNMI Women's National Team in the curtain-raiser in Division B, 3-2, to gain its second win in three games. Young Ha Hwang, Dong Min Kim, and Sangpil Cheon delivered the goals for Sun Palace, which dropped its season debut (against Shirley's last March 3) before barging into the win column with the victory over Pacific Islands Club last March 10. Sun Palace, PIC, and Shirley's hold similar 2-0-1 win-draw-loss records after Week 3 of the competition, while the WNT has yet to get a victory in three matches.

Hwang put Sun Palace in the board in the 18th minute and their team posted a 2-0 advantage four minutes later, thanks to Kim's shot. Lilian Podziewski then cut the deficit to one when she found the back of the net in the 37th minute. However, Cheon's goal right in the 47th minute made it another two-point lead for Sun Palace, while the WNT scored the last goal in

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Mister leads finishers in Road to Tagaman

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Veteran multi-sports athlete Tyce Mister was the top solo finisher in last Saturday's IT&E Road to Tagaman Tri, besting 16 other individuals.

Mister completed the one-kilometer swim, 35K bike, and 5K run in 1:49:55 to rule the men's field. He was the lone participant (solo division) to finish the course that started and ended at Kilili Beach under the 1:50:00 mark.

Nap Dizon and Mark Isip rounded the Top 3 after checking in at 1:56:17 and 1:56:43, respectively. Other finishers in the men's division were Travis Spaeth (2:00:47), Floro Derexes (2:03:18), Milan Rabold (2:06:23), John Dax Moreno (2:09:42), Robby Glass (2:10:28), Kevin Jacob (2:16:08), Robert Torres (2:21:19), Leo Wania (2:29:15), and Colin Thompson (2:31:18).

In the women's division, Lily Muldoon reached the finish line first and timed in

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Tyce Mister heads to the swim-bike transition area during last Saturday's IT&E Road to Tagaman Tri at Kilili Beach.